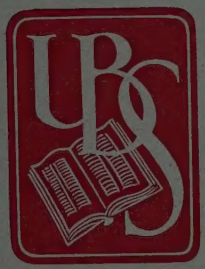
BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES



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SECOND QUARTER

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UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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Editorial

THE problem of the fight against illiteracy is one which permanently preoccupies the Bible Societies, not because they play a direct part in it, but because of the results which it may have on their activities.

This problem had already been given attention when, in 1948, the Council of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES asked the secretariate to continue the study of the question and the collection of documents. As a result of the events which have marked the history of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES since that time, the decision taken at the Dunblane Council meeting was not given immediate attention. The first part of this issue attempts to take up the threads again, and the study by the Rev. W. J. Platt (which served as a basis of discussion at Dunblane) presents the problem fully. It has retained its topical nature, but a complementary note takes account of the latest developments in the realm of the fight against illiteracy.

When asking Dr. Laubach to write an article for this issue of the *Bulletin*, it was not our intention to go into details about his method nor to examine its advantages and disadvantages in comparison with other methods in current use. It was much more our aim to find out what one of the best-known specialists from missionary and ecclesiastical circles in the struggle against illiteracy had to say to the Bible Societies and their friends, with regard to the

contribution which they can make to the campaign which he and others are conducting for the development of literacy. We are glad to see that in his article Dr. Laubach asks us a question, and thus helps us to set out in precise terms a problem to which the Bible Societies will soon have to find a solution.

One might perhaps think that the amount of space allotted to China and Greece in the news items is out of proportion to the rest. For different reasons, however, the situation concerning Bible distribution in these two countries is of particular interest to us.

In view of the influx of conflicting stories of events in China, we have thought it useful to give large extracts from the report of one of the only religious organisations covering the whole territory of China. The nature of the problem of the Bible in a communist world is far from being clarified, but this report provides a valuable contribution to the question. Moreover, the information provides a happy complement to the account given by the Rev. W. J. Platt on his visit to China in our preceding issue.

The situation which is developing in Greece, on the other hand, is also of significance. It is the first Orthodox country to be affected by the present "rediscovery of the Bible." This evolution will no doubt lead, sooner or later, to the raising again of the whole problem of relations between the Bible Societies and the Orthodox Church which, as Professor Bratsiotis points out, has always been a little distrustful of the intentions and work of the Bible Societies. It is a problem which, no doubt, has numerous theological implications. However, the Bible Societies cannot but rejoice to see one section of the great Orthodox Church according to the distribution and reading of the Bible, a place which had never previously been given to them.

Some Bible Societies have not yet completed reports of their activities during 1949 ; thus we are, as yet, unable to give a complete picture of the work accomplished last year. It has, however, been possible to draw up a list of the new publications printed under the auspices of the Bible Societies, and we are glad to be able to give details of the progress made. But we cannot sit back and be satisfied with what has been accomplished ; there are still about 1,000 languages and dialects into which no portion of the Bible has yet been translated, and about 300 million human beings who speak these languages and to whom the Word of God cannot yet be read and preached in their own tongue.

Here is a challenge not only for all Bible Societies, but for all churches and all those who are already benefiting from the advantage of being able to read the Bible, the Word of God, in their own language. Let us hope that the call will be heard, the challenge faced.

LITERACY AND THE BIBLE SOCIETIES

William J. Platt.

THROUGHOUT the centuries literacy has been a means to an end. Peoples have learned to read and write because it advanced some other aim. The records of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," one of the pioneer documents of civilisation, were undertaken to record information about worldly status which might be valuable in a future life. St. John writes "that ye might believe" and St. Luke pens his Gospel with a view to the preservation of the record of our Lord's life : "It seemed good to me to set down in order....."

In our modern world too, education is a means rather than an end. In 1883 Japan introduced compulsory education and became 99% literate in order to create a strong nation equal to and if possible more powerful than any other nation. Ignorance was a stumbling block, while knowledge was a key to power. Russia is a recent example of the same kind of thing. Since the revolution in 1917, her population, computed to be some 193,000,000, has reduced its illiteracy figure from 67% to 10%, which means that 110,000,000 people have learned to read in 30 years—an average of well over 3,000,000 a year. In the year 1930, 22,000,000 people are said to have become literate. The use made of literacy and its benefits in propaganda are evident when we learn that whereas in 1913, 3 million copies of newspapers circulated in Russia, a generation later 39 million copies circulated. That Russia takes translation matters very seriously is manifested from the fact that education is carried on in the U.S.S.R. in 90 different languages. To see the technique at work, we might take the example of Kirghizia, which had no written language until 1917. In 1941 this one State had 2,159 schools with 328,000 pupils and 1,341,000 books had already circulated in the Kirghiz language. Moreover, the spread of culture does not stop at book knowledge, for there were 17 theatres in this same republic, nine of which were showing plays in the vernacular.

And again, if we analyse the desire of Bible Societies and missionary societies for the spread of literacy, it is not primarily a desire to teach people to read, so much as to propagate the Gospel message in the widest possible constituency and to make the Word of God known in all the world.

A New Situation

We recall that one of the historic functions of Christianity has been to challenge the existing order of things by pioneering new ways of life. Ultimately the services rendered to the community by Christianity have been recognised by secular forces as being the right way for " civilised man " to live. To-day the literacy and education which were pioneered across Europe by the Christian Church have become the programme of Governments of all progressive countries and have been recognised as the sane way of life. Thus the challenge now coming to us from the spread of literacy is the measure of our own success. Now, however, we have arrived at the stage where the Christian Church is no longer the main pioneer of literacy and education. It is the State which takes the lead, and some of the great States have literally become missionary societies. Until recently, provided the Bible Societies kept the Churches and missions well supplied with Scriptures in countries like Africa and certain parts of Asia, they were in large measure meeting local Scripture needs. But this is no longer true. Now they must give increasing attention to the literacy which is being spread by secular forces, often having at their disposal large material resources. While, therefore, the recent spread of literacy is an increased opportunity and the Bible Societies have become even more potent weapons of evangelisation than ever before, where the new enlightenment involves a deliberate paganisation of life it is an urgent challenge.

Need for New Planning

In surveying the spread of literacy, one seeks to find out where the policy of the Bible Societies will be seriously affected. To do this, a study of local conditions is essential and, in studying them, two different situations face us—one in rural and one in urban areas. From the early centuries, people off the

high roads of civilisation have been the last to be Christianised, as also they have been the last to be made literate, while people in the large cities, as St. Paul well knew and the very word "*pagani*" indicates, were, generally speaking, the first to be Christians. Urban populations have fewer "roots in the soil"; they mix more with other races and their minds are more open to new influences. Moreover, they are more often on the main lines of transport and communications. Literacy is, therefore, highest in towns and cities. So to-day we find that literacy campaigns are taking place mainly amongst rural populations. From the Bible Society point of view this may mean that town depots are not enough, that colportage— which has so widely broken down since the war—may need to be rebuilt on an even wider scale. Motor vans may also now become more necessary. We may now find in some areas, where colportage was formerly too costly, that due to increased literacy both colportage and motor vans may become more economical, if judged by the numbers of Scriptures sold.

Again, on closer study, it becomes evident that both primary education and mass literacy campaigns thrive best where there is centralised organisation with an ideology or way of life to propagate, be it a Christian mission or a secular state. Where, however, there is a Christian community or a central Government, stagnant in its thinking or weak in its organisation, despite good intentions, education stagnates too. If, for instance, one makes a comparison between such dissimilar areas as Iran and Nigeria, it might be considered whether or not the Bible Societies, in their long-term planning, should place Nigeria on a higher priority than Iran for Scripture supply and more energetic experiment in distribution, because Nigeria, though not as yet self-governing and far from being highly literate, will become literate before Iran, due to the existence of a strong central Government with an educational policy. Another illustration of centralised planning is evidenced in a country like Eritrea, where during the Italian régime of fifty years only one elementary school for native Eritreans was established, but where in three or four years since 1942 more than 28 of these schools have been opened and a number of native teachers trained.

An important factor to be taken into account is, of course, the strength or otherwise of Christian missions in an area, and they are a means of distribution and translation, as well as a means of education. In some areas their role in educational matters serves in lieu of a strong Government policy. In Portuguese Angola, for instance, the Government is not greatly interested in the education of the natives, but missions are vigorous. In fixing Bible Society priorities, therefore, one would take into consideration not just population masses or the present number of literates, but organised forces which are now at work for the spread of literacy, whether they are religious or secular.

This evidently points to the necessity for detailed study of each area of operations and for considerable local knowledge.

Facing the Facts

The main means at present for the spread of literacy is still the primary school, but the movement for the mass education of adults is undoubtedly gaining ground rapidly. A striking example of both methods is to be found in India. Here it is computed that in the year 1936-37 there were 12 million children on the registers of primary schools, about one-quarter of whom stayed long enough at school to become literate. About 3,000,000 children are therefore systematically being made literate each year. Now we must

add to that figure the results of adult education. Of course, in a land so vast and so diverse statistics are not easy to come by, but figures based on results in nine States (whose population covers half the population of India as a whole) show that during the eight years ending in 1947, 3,200,000 adults were made literate. This works out at an average of 400,000 adults becoming literate each year, in addition to the 3,000,000 children from primary schools. Now the average annual circulation of Scriptures amongst the whole population of India for the same period was only 1,100,000, so that it would appear that Scriptures were available for only one-third of the new literates each year, not to speak of the normal needs of the Christian community.

Again, in China, reports—even during the war years—are most impressive. From the Chinese Ministry of Education comes the news that in 1944 there were nearly 18,000,000 children in primary schools, of whom we might expect perhaps that 4,000,000 became literate each year. In addition to the work done in the schools, it is stated that between the years 1938 and 1942 some 46,348,469 adults were made literate—an average of about 9,000,000 a year. In July, 1945, new post-war policy seems to have added to the local urgency, for a law was passed which laid it down that all children between the ages of 6 and 12 should receive free, compulsory education. It was also planned that another 19,000,000 adults should be made literate between 1942 and 1945. Doubtless the state of affairs in China has gravely jeopardised the good intentions, but, if one accepts the statement of the Chinese Ministry of Education that in 1947 an enrolment of 15,000,000 illiterate adults was actually secured for the first term of a Government 5-year drive against illiteracy, we are faced with a vast new Bible Society opportunity. Fairly firm figures may lead us to conclude that, of the 15,000,000 enrolled, it is probable that 10,000,000 completed the course, so that if the illiteracy drive continues at the same rate we might perhaps estimate that, through primary schools and by adult education, some 14,000,000 people will be becoming new literates each year in China. Let us remember that such figures are cumulative. Even if we do not speak of the lean circulation of Scriptures during the war years or of the ordinary needs of the large literate community (which Dr. James Yen now puts at about 35% of the total population—approximately 135,000,000), Bible Society circulation, even if its peak year of 12,000,000 Scriptures—mainly single portions—could become normal, would not be keeping pace with the new literates each year.

Africa is a different type of mission field from Asia for she has no history to speak of and no indigenous books. When her house is swept and garnished of its simple faiths by Western materialism, there is indeed a vacuum and the last state is worse than the first. Yet schools are full to breaking point. In British Africa, expansion of primary schools is steadily going on, and there is a new emphasis on the drive against illiteracy amongst adults. The general policy for the British Colonies was laid down in December, 1944, in the Government White Paper " Mass Education in African Society," when it was planned to teach 40,000,000 in a generation. To-day Mass Education Officers have been appointed in most of the Colonies. In Nigeria the number of primary school children has risen in the last five years from 250,000 to between 500,000 and 600,000, while a full-time Mass Education Officer has started work and adult education campaigns are at present taking place in areas covering a total population of about 800,000. On the Gold Coast, in addition to the adult literacy campaigns, the number of pupils in primary schools rose from 87,502 to 184,520 between 1939 and 1945. At the rate of expansion planned, there will be a school in every village in 20 years' time. A similar trend is shown in reports from all the other Colonies in British Africa,

and particular care is being taken in Tanganyika, in view of recent Government economic developments, to see that government educational policy is sympathetic to missionary efforts. In Christian missionary work in British Africa much more emphasis seems to have been placed on ability to read before admission into Church membership than is the case, for example, in India.

If one considers smaller, though important, areas where literacy experiments are taking place, the example of Mexico is interesting. Here there has been a very vigorous and successful literacy campaign during recent years, in which the Government has sought to enlist the entire population of the country. Statistical reports vary, but it is estimated that in 1946 alone over 1,000,000 people were taught to read.

Bible Society Policy

What can the Bible Societies profitably learn from the above facts, and many similar ones that could be instanced, of rapid growth in the number of simple people who in these days of their awakening and fuller life are becoming capable of reading the message of the Kingdom for the first time?

(1) The first thing must surely be to make Bible Society agents and secretaries in every corner of the globe more than ever conscious that a new world is being born around us. People long inarticulate and passive are stretching out their hands for more knowledge and a better life, and our local representatives will need to be the ears and eyes of their respective Societies, as well as the hands to do our work. It may be true to say that the men on the spot are sometimes so cumbered about by much serving and by local limitations that they may not be able to see the world significance of what may be local and spasmodic movements towards literacy, unless we tell them the significance of such happenings on a wider world front. As an example of this kind of thing in missionary circles, a recent visitor to Ceylon, well acquainted with the activities of Marxists in Europe, found local missionaries there not particularly interested in the influential growth of Communism amongst the local Tamil migrants and doing nothing by way of answering their anti-Christian arguments.

We would suggest therefore :—

(*a*) That our Bible Society men overseas ought to find in this Bulletin news from every front, supplying not only interesting information about Bible Society work but notes about the relevancy of this work to the trends of more general world movements.

(*b*) That we ought not only to get our agents literacy-minded but be able to count on them to make local surveys of such important happenings and to transmit to us news items concerning developments in missionary work, Government policy concerning education, etc. Naturally, they ought to be members of local missionary councils, literacy committees, and other relevant bodies.

One of the difficulties that we have had in collecting material about the spread of literacy has been that, working at headquarters, we could get only fragmentary information and we were unable to follow through with any continuity literacy movements taking place in even moderately isolated localities. Only the man on the spot can supply this information with any accuracy.

(*c*) That, apart from the help that they could give to headquarters, Bible Society agents overseas should view their work, be it circulation or

translation, not only from the point of view of the increase of circulation over the preceding year, but from the point of view of whether or not Scripture circulation is actually keeping pace with the growth of literacy, the increase in population, the local spread of secular literature, etc.

(2) In addition to the collection of facts and figures from Bible Society representatives overseas and their tabulation in every Bible House, these figures and facts should be forwarded to the headquarters of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES where such statistics will be brought together and correlated with the figures for world Scripture circulation, the progress of Scripture translations, etc. An annual review of relevant world movements and of the circulation of Scriptures could be made available for the meetings of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, and would gain a useful place in the councils of Christian world statemen, as well as being a guide to Bible Society policy.

(3) The day has probably passed, for every Society, when in production matters they can live from hand to mouth, "improvising" so to speak, as each need is heard of or "order" for Scriptures is received. To do effective planning for future days it will be necessary to tabulate the needs of each field based on priorities rather than on "orders" or on occasional letters from missionaries. For this to be done the policy-making staffs of each Society must have standardised progress reports periodically available. The UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, receiving half-yearly progress reports from each Society, would thus be enabled to take a global view of needs and priorities, so that, where one Society could not cope with an urgent need, another Society could be invited to do so. By this procedure it would be possible to cope with :

(*a*) the vast leeway of Scripture needs left by the war years ;
(*b*) normal growth of population and literacy ;
(*c*) world emergencies.

Unless a unified scheme of planning and necessary action is made possible by some such arrangement and sharing of information, the Bible Societies will never be able to attain the "one plan" in Scripture production and circulation necessary for our "one world." (This plan would, of course, take into account the existing difficulties in supply of materials, the availability of presses, etc.)

(4) In matters of the establishment of Scripture needs, the various headquarters of the Bible Societies ought to have frequent contact with Mass Education Officers, UNESCO officials, etc., to get knowledge which at the moment no one Society can command about the growth of new literates, whether through primary education or mass campaigns. Such contacts would be additionally valuable in order to fit the production of Scriptures, in quality, quantity and format, into their literature programmes. The various Bible Houses ought also to be regular subscribers to journals, official or semi-official, which report on educational policy not only in the Protestant nations but also relative to the colonies of Roman Catholic countries such as France, Belgium, Portugal and Spain, in order that a digest could be made for the administrative officers of the Society, its committees and also its home propaganda department.

(5) It is already understood that distribution by colportage, which suffered so terribly during the war, will need to be reviewed in proportion as literacy movements develop, and this is particularly important in rural areas not easy of access by normal means of transport and bookshop distribution. It ought probably to be considered how far Bible Society colporteurs should

carry with them literature, other than Scriptures, suitable for new literates, e.g. primers, and how far a colporteur could use very simple visual-aids for his work. In some areas motor vans, carrying Scriptures and other Christian literature and provided with cinema equipment and perhaps a loud-speaker, might be made available.

(6) A further question to be reviewed is how far our popular editions need modification in size of type, etc., for use by new literates. Ought such editions to be planned corporately in the light of the necessity for large-type Scriptures and good illustrations ?

(7) Is it advisable that such Scriptures, specially produced, could be considered as rewards or prizes presented to new literates, just as Scriptures are presented to new graduates in India ? The local missions would need to decide this matter.

(8) It has been suggested that there are versions in the classical script or translation which are too difficult for new literates. The Bible Societies might well consider how far they would undertake translations into simpler language for simple rural readers.

(9) In view of the wide need for Portions, New Testaments and Bibles for new literates, a need with which we cannot cope except over a long period of time, is it not advisable that the Bible Societies recognise as a sound principle the handing over of Scripture stories, extracts and selections to Societies which specialise in this particular work (where such Societies exist), recognising as we do that in addition to Scripture, hymns and prayers often form part of the utility of such a booklet ?

(10) To-day the world need for literature is such that unless sufficient reading matter of a Christian character can be supplied, wide-scale lapses into illiteracy will certainly take place, and, whether or not Scriptures are supplied in adequate quantities, secular literature will certainly become increasingly available. Can the Bible Societies, therefore, consider acting as a rallying point (at least sharing their information) for Christian Literature Societies, Christian publishing firms, Bible Reading Associations and the like, so that a co-ordinated attack on secularism, commensurate with the world need, can be planned through the printed page ?

The Bible Societies, with their resources, their widely scattered agencies, and now their co-ordination through the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, are in a peculiarly strong position to give a lead to Christian forces in a world crusade of enquiry concerning need, advice and help in planning the supply of Christian printed matter, of which the Scriptures are the basis.

* * *

COMPLEMENTARY NOTE :

Since the time when the preceding article was written, there has been an increasing interest shown on the part of governments in the fight against illiteracy. There is hardly a country to-day with a large percentage of illiterates where plans are not being studied or put into practice, for the development of primary education and for teaching adults to read.

One particularly important aspect of this development is the interest shown by UNESCO in the matter of illiteracy. The appointment, as Director-General of UNESCO, of Dr. Jaime Torrès Bodet, former minister of education

and then of foreign affairs in Mexico, has certainly contributed to a large extent to this development. Dr. Bodet was responsible for organising the fight against illiteracy in that country during his office as minister of education. After two years, 1,200,000 Mexican adults have already learnt to read and there has been no slackening of the campaign since.

At the present time most of the countries of Latin America have launched or are preparing for their literacy campaigns. UNESCO also took advantage of the occasion to organise last July a seminar of experts from the various Latin American countries to discuss the best method and to prepare the documents and tools useful for any government anxious to make its attack on illiteracy more effective.

The question of method was also studied by a special section before being taken up in the plenary sessions and the " global method "—which works on the principle that the pupil understands the sense of a phrase before being able to analyse its components—was given precedent over the " Laubach " method in the case of the languages of South America—which is based on the use of graphic pictures associated with groups of sounds.

At the end of 1949, UNESCO called another seminar of specialists on mass education in Mysore (India), with delegates from the Near East and Southern Asia. The realm studied by the various groups was wider than the one in the Latin American seminar, for besides the specialised section for the study of the particular problem of illiteracy, other sections dealt with the general problem of education in rural areas, both from the professional point of view, as well as in social matters and hygiene. No decisions were taken nor any recommendations made as to the method to be used in the fight against illiteracy, but there was a general sense of agreement on some general principles.

Finally, mention must be made both of the experimental centre of UNESCO in Haiti where, within the framework of education and the raising of the level of culture of " backward " peoples, the literacy problem occupies a large position, and of the mission which UNESCO has been asked by the government of Siam to send to that country to study the problems of an educational nature which arise there, and to make suggestions for their solution. (In Siam 70% of the population are illiterate, one-third of the children of school age do not attend school and only a third of the remainder continue their studies beyond four years.)

This interest shown by UNESCO in the literacy problem indicates that we have here one of the burning questions of the present day. It would indeed be extremely grave if, at a time when governments are taking up seriously the struggle against illiteracy, with means differing from those which are available to churches and missions, the latter and even more particularly the Bible Societies were not ready to supply these millions of new readers with the written Word of God as one of their first books, in an attractive presentation and at an easily accessible price. The points of strategic importance to-day seem to be in the British colonies, in India and in South America. It is time that the Bible Societies—all of them and not only the big ones !—set to work to see in what measure and within the limited area of the mission fields of their national societies, they could now already co-operate and provide the missionary societies with these Gospels, and Testaments which they need in order to reach the new literates.

O.B.

LITERACY AND BIBLE READING

FRANK C. LAUBACH

ONE of the most interesting facts brought out by a map in England, is that more than ninety-five per cent. of the Protestants of the world are literate. Something near half of the Roman Catholics are literate, and a little more than ten per cent. of the non-Christians of the world are literate.

When one studies the history of literacy another striking fact emerges. All but two or three per cent. of the non-Christians were taught by Christians or under direct stimulus of Christian countries. The only non-Christian country in the world that is really literate is Japan, and it became so under the stimulation of Christian nations.

This is cause and effect. The evangelical churches emphasise the necessity of going to God directly, and finding His Word in the Bible. Therefore to be an intelligent evangelical Christian one must read the Bible—one must be able to read. This is the conviction that led to the stupendous progress of education in all Northern Europe, in the British commonwealths and in the United States, where there are more Protestants than Catholics. The Roman Catholic goes to his priest for guidance, while Protestants go to the Bible—a Protestant is his own priest.

The present new emphasis upon literacy stemmed from Protestantism. Protestant missionaries in all but a few instances originated the lessons now in use, and stimulated the campaigns where they did not themselves conduct them. It is usual for missionaries to work about two years before governments, convinced of the value of literacy, take over the campaigns and make them official.

At first glance one feels like saying that Russia is the single great exception. But she is not an exception. The literacy campaign in Russia would never have occurred had not Lenin lived for years in New York City and other Protestant areas and become convinced that literacy was necessary for his socialistic ideas to succeed in Russia. While Lenin rejected Christianity, he did adopt this idea of education and several other Christian ideas into his Communist state.

Someone may quibble and say that New York is as Catholic and Jewish as it is Protestant. But both Catholics and Jews adopt the Protestant traditions in New York. One Roman Catholic Spanish priest said of the priests of the United States: "Caranza, they are all Protestants!" And in many respects he is right, certainly in their enthusiasm for universal education. Everywhere, directly or indirectly popular education was initiated by the Protestant reformation.

The Bible has now been translated, either in whole or in part, into the languages of probably 90 per cent. of the people of the world. Since the days of Wycliffe and Luther men have toiled for unnumbered millions of days and nights to make these translations in over 1100 tongues. It has seemed to them to be a sacred calling, as sacred as preaching or praying. These diligent sacrificial souls have gone on far ahead of the ability of the world to read. For as yet only forty per cent. of the human race is literate.

The reason that education lagged behind Bible translation was that it was supposed, until thirty years ago, that adults could not learn to read. Their brains were thought to have hardened beyond the point of retaining much new knowledge. It is true that adults do not have such keen memories

as children, but it is not true that they are too old to learn, if the right method is used. They cannot learn all the words in a language, but they can learn the phonetics in the languages which have only one sound for a letter, and after they know the phonetics they can pronounce every word in their language. They become slow readers.

The picture phonetic method of teaching adults is now in use in about two hundred languages of the world. About ten million adults are learning to read each year, in Asia, Africa and Latin America. They are learning to read slowly the words which they have always spoken. It is months or years after they have become readers of easy matter that they are able to read what is currently written, with pleasure and understanding.

This is especially true in Asia, where the alphabets are older than our Roman alphabet and where they have a very difficult style and an ancient classical vocabulary not used in conversation. Very little is being written which the new literate can understand, because neither the words nor the style are familiar. It is as hard as it would be for us to read Chaucer.

The same thing holds true of Spanish and Portuguese. The written language abounds in exquisite flowery language, but is totally incomprehensible to adults who are just learning to read.

Hence these great literacy campaigns which grow ever larger in all countries must be accompanied by a truly tremendous effort to write newspapers, magazines and books with short sentences and words which the new literates already understand.

Unfortunately the translators of the Bible in Asia and in Latin America have followed the style and vocabulary of the cultured classes. They did this because nobody could read, except these cultured people, when the translations were made and the translators wanted their translations to appeal to the educated classes as excellent style. The difficulty was aggravated by the conscientiousness with which the translators tried to keep their translations faithful to the original text.

That is why it has been necessary for us to prepare a " Story of Jesus " in each language where we make lessons, to lead the readers up to the vocabulary of the four Gospels. This helps, but there is still a great need for simpler translations for the masses of people throughout Asia and Latin America.

There is need of easier translations also in English, French and Dutch Bibles where these languages are used as secondary languages as they are in India, French Africa and the Dutch East Indies. The Basic English is an attempt at this, but I believe a very much better translation will soon appear based upon the English Revised Standard version of 1946, but confined to about 1,700 of the most used English words. Hundreds of involved sentences must be broken down—such as the first paragraph of Luke and the first paragraph in Romans.

This is certainly not making the translation less like the original. The original Greek in the New Testament was written in the language which the common people spoke, not in classical Greek. It is the same language one finds in the letters which people wrote to one another on papyri or bits of pottery. When this very colloquial Greek is translated into difficult classical Hindi or Arabic, the spirit of the book is lost. A Greek which wooed the masses by its simplicity, when translated into Tamil, puts up a wall between the book

and the common people. It is correctly translated only when it becomes as simple and delightful in Tamil as it was in the Greek "koiné."

We are therefore ready for the translators to make simple translations in hundreds of languages.

The Church is becoming conscious in these days of rapid Communist gains in illiterate countries, that preachers have preached above the heads of the masses, and writers of Christian literature have written above the heads of the masses, while the Communists have studied the languages of the masses and have written as they speak. It is the Communists who have written and talked the " koiné " while we have floated up into the level of the " upper middle classes " with our preaching, our writing and our Bible. We now see that if we do not want to lose the masses we must learn a lesson from the Communists and write for them.

Jesus was a carpenter surrounded by fishermen and workers. The common people heard him gladly. The common people read the Greek Testament in common conversational Greek gladly, but we have translated the Bible into language unintelligible to the masses, and unless we repent and do the job again we shall never make the multitudes Bible readers. We have made the tremendous mistake of first replacing the priest with the Bible and then making the Bible out of the reach of the majority of people.

We did all this unconsciously and so gradually that nobody noticed it until the Communists came and showed us our blunder. Now we know. If we are not utterly foolish it will not be long before we shall move with long strides, and recapture the carpenters and fisherfolk whom Jesus loved.

THE ACTIVITY OF THE BIBLE SOCIETIES FOR NEW LITERATES

THE *British and Foreign Bible Society* has in preparation two Gospels for new literates. These will be illustrated with designs adapted to the text which will be printed in large characters. One of these is the Gospel of Luke in English for the West Indies, and the other the Gospel of Mark in Mende (Sierra Leone, W. Africa.)

The *Netherlands Bible Society* is contemplating the publication, along a similar line, of Bible stories for new literates in Indonesia.

In Brazil a large type Gospel of Mark, with the words in the first few chapters broken up into syllables, has been issued by the *Brazil Bible Society*.

Although Japan is not a country where the problem of illiteracy is acute, it is one of the countries where the Bible has been translated into a literary language somewhat difficult for the common people to understand. The *Japan Bible Society* intends to publish large quantities of one or more Gospels in a simplified translation, thus answering one of the remarks passed by Dr. Laubach in the preceding article.

From 1946 onwards the *American Bible Society* has published some series of Scripture Reading Sheets in various languages of Central and South America, and also in Arabic. These are, in general, short passages of text printed in large type on separate sheets of paper, sometimes coloured. They have been graded according to the general difficulty of the text from the point

of view of a new reader. They are not to be used for teaching a life of Christ, or for any particular line of doctrine. They are prepared solely for work with new literates to help bridge the gap from primer material to reading a Gospel or the New Testament. On each sheet it is made clear that the text is a selection from a Gospel which is in the New Testament, a part of the Bible. The passages either relate to the life of Jesus or to His parables.

O. B.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information on the Bible Societies, but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Austria

THE Secretary of the *Austrian Bible Committee* has sent in the following circulation figures for Austria during the calendar year 1949 :—

7,316 Bibles ; 11,509 New Testaments ; 27,443 Portions,

totalling 46,268 copies of the Scriptures as against 46,958 copies circulated during 1948.

The Secretary draws attention to the fact that ready money is becoming rare in Austria and that people only earn just enough to buy food and some clothing. 1948 was also still a " reconstruction year " and many people bought Bibles and New Testaments then who had not been able to buy them for years because of the shortage of Scriptures. Furthermore, all Roman Catholic editions of the Bible had been sold out. This explains why in 1948 twice as many Bibles were circulated as in 1949.

During 1949 the agency in Austria had two colporteurs at work. Between them they circulated 42% of the total number of Scriptures circulated by the agency for the year and as many Scriptures as were circulated by seven colporteurs in 1938 when the total circulation was 33,215.

In its 1949 budget the Austrian Committee had reckoned on an income of 10,500 schillings from the churches, collections and so forth. The end of the financial year having been moved back from 31st December to 31st October, the income was calculated on a period of ten months only ; however, actual receipts exceeded the estimated income and reached 11,890.50 schillings.

Belgium

Bible Sunday has been fixed for 23rd April and will be followed by a national campaign of colportage which is already being prepared. The object of this " campaign " is to unite the churches of all denominations (a little over 200) in the work in Belgium for an effort of distributing the Word of God as widely as possible, either by individuals or by team-work.

Special posters have been printed for the occasion, reproduced from one of the American Bible Society posters, ' The Book of all Nations.' Sets of

ten smaller posters, reproducing texts of the Bible in various foreign languages with a short historical background are also in the press. These are reproduced from a series published by the American Bible Society in English.

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The Second issue of the *Belgian Bible Society's* News Bulletin in French and the first issue in Flemish came out in January last. It contains news of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES meeting in New York, extracts from the British and Foreign Bible Society popular report on Poland, Spain and Italy and reproduces reports from the colporteurs in the service of the Belgian Bible Society.

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The same issue also gives an account, written by a Belgian girl, of a Bible camp which the National Bible Society of Scotland invited her to attend last summer in Scotland. This is surely one way of promoting the spirit of fellowship between Bible Societies which might well be used again.

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In 1947 five colporteurs were at work in Belgium.
They circulated : 81 Bibles, 2,055 Testaments, 6,041 Portions.

In 1948 the same number of colporteurs circulated :
187 Bibles, 2,435 Testaments, 8,210 Portions.

Last year one colporteur was added to the staff and the distribution figures were :
434 Bibles, 2,085 Testaments, 6,933 Portions.

One of the colporteurs worked only 3 months and another 10 months of 1949. This year the staff has again increased by one. In many cases the colporteurs have taken part in special evangelistic campaigns organised by the churches. This new way of collaboration between Bible Society and Church communities has been very fruitful and much appreciated.

Brazil

The Rev. Evaldo Godinho Alves has been appointed as the new General Secretary of the *Brazilian Bible Society* in succession to the Rev. E. M. Krischke whose resignation was reported in the last issue of this Bulletin. He takes up his duties immediately.

Burma

The secretary in Burma of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev. H. C. Willans, gives the following example of the shortage of Scriptures in that country :

The situation in one area is fairly indicative of the need in the whole Haka field (in the mountains of Western Burma). In spring I toured the Zokhua area and found the Bible count to be as follows : in Lamtuk village, 138 Christians and 3 New Testaments ; next day to Malsawm, 72 believers and not a single Bible ; then to Chinkhua where there is one Bible for 137 believers. A nearby village Hmaikha, could report only one-third of a New Testament for 113 Christians.

We are already printing another edition of 10,000 Haka Chin New Testaments. We hope that by the time the printing is done Burma's roads and waterways will be open again.

China

The dissemination of the Scriptures in China is making considerable strides. The circulation has grown from 412,154 in 1946 to 2,932,682 in 1948 ; the provisional figure for 1949 is about 2,160,000, a very fine achievement in such an eventful year.

The secretaries of the Bible Society are scattered all over the country and able to continue working for the propagation of the Scriptures.

On December 2nd, 1949, *China Bible House* was given permission to import Bible paper from abroad into Shanghai for the printing of Bibles, although paper is now off the list of importable materials.

■

From reports of China Bible House, we take the following passages :

The new ideology like new wine is fermenting, expanding and penetrating the various strata of society throughout China. Study groups are the order of the day. Not only university and middle school students are cramming Karl Marx and Engel, Lenin and Stalin. Compulsory classes are now being conducted for army recruits and new government officials, and voluntary classes for professional men and women, children in grammar school, farmers, industrial labourers, preachers, missionaries and foreign business men. Everywhere people are scrutinising Mao Tze-tung's books dealing with the programme of the New Democracy in China, trying to find out what materialistic communism really means. Everyone in China senses that his destiny more or less is bound up with this man and his philosophy. What is Mao Tze-tung's message ? Will his new philosophy help us solve life's problems ? Where will it lead China ? These and countless other questions force themselves upon us, demanding answer.

Economically the new régime encourages self-reliance and independence, and tries every legitimate means to curb inflation. " Do not be dependent upon anyone." " Pay your own way." " Produce more." " Earn your own living." " Kill speculation." " Be sure to look any gift horse in the mouth."

Some churches, too, have caught the fever. One preacher, with the consent of his congregation, is running a successful biscuit factory on weekdays and preaching on Sundays as usual. Another pastor is supporting himself and his family by soap making, no doubt admonishing his parishioners and neighbours to remember that " cleanliness is next to godliness." Still others, while not overlooking their spiritual ministry, in the tradition of the Master and of the apostle Paul, are working with their hands, partly from sheer necessity and partly to comply with the new order of things. Favourite avocations include sock knitting, towel weaving, poultry raising, gardening and book selling.

Chinese Latinization gains new impetus. Even the national language may take on a new form. " Latinxua " is the name of a simple form of romanization, first developed by a Chinese professor in Siberia more than 20 years ago. It uses 28 letters of the Latin alphabet, all of which may be found on any American or European typewriter, linotype or monotype machine. Syllables quite properly are combined into words ; sometimes even a whole phrase or expression becomes one word, as in Hebrew. Illiterates, who still constitute 80% of the

Chinese population, have been taught to read and write " Latinxua " in five or six months' time.

The leaders of the movement believe that eventually " Latinxua " will replace Chinese characters at least for purposes of common letter writing, library indices, primary school text books, commercial correspondence and filing, and popular periodicals. Our Administrative Committee has authorised the staff to experiment with a " Latinxua " transliteration of one of the Gospels and to take full advantage of this new means of reaching the masses with the Word of God. About 40 years ago an attempt was made to popularise the use of what is known as the standard Romanisation of Chinese, and several books of the New Testament using this system, were published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in Shanghai. Due to lack of sufficient support from government and educational authorities, it enjoyed only a brief period of success. With regard to " Latinxua " the government authorities, while not yet officially recognising it, are quietly encouraging its use and permitting its extension throughout China.

Religious liberty assured. While missionaries doing work in China are divided in their opinion about their future status as a group, no one despairs of the future of the Christian Church. The vast majority are convinced that it will survive, and not be eclipsed by any future social or economic movement. Already Protestant Chinese Christian leaders are reorienting themselves and their Christian organisations to the new conditions arising from the establishment of the New Democracy. The new régime guarantees religious liberty.

Our general staff remained unchanged in 1949. We are glad to report that every secretary and staff member was faithful and stayed on the job throughout the civil war period, regardless of personal danger.

We have attempted to call a Chinese general secretary and a Chinese promotional secretary, but so far without success. However, we are continuing our search, believing that God will eventually answer our prayer. In the meantime we are fortunate in having three Chinese Christian leaders who since April, 1949, have offered their voluntary services to act as an administrative committee and have met regularly once a week. Their invaluable services have been greatly appreciated for they have acted as liaison between the China Bible House and the new authorities. So far no hindrances have developed regarding property or printing and distribution of Scriptures.

In order to meet the challenge of China's Northwest more adequately, we launched out in faith and purchased a Dodge truck in February, 1949, fitting it out as a Bible van. Rev. Horace S. Williams, a great friend of the Bible Society, was kind enough to drive the truck from Shanghai to Lanchow, a five weeks' gruelling trip, and handed it over to the regional secretary Mr. Anders W. Marthinson. The Bible Van in the past year made several long trips, pioneering along new missionary roads in the Tsaidam territory beyond Lake Kokonor on the Tibetan border, and visiting Tihwa, the capital of Sinkiang province.

The first billboard in China advertising Bibles was painted on the side of a building on Nanking Road opposite the Race Course in Shanghai. It is 45 by 25 feet and shows a pastor offering a Bible to an eager group of four : a young mother with two children, and the old grandfather. The Chinese characters say that the Bible is " The Great Book of the World " and that it is " The Book Everyone Wishes to Read."

Regarding the circulation of Bibles, our greatest single boon has been the Chinese Post Office which has made its every service available to us. At present it is again operating 43,000 branch offices and maintaining 59,000 kilometres (40,000 miles) of mail routes, substantially the same number as in 1936. In 1950, circulation of second and third class mail matter will be given greater consideration and the number of branch offices will be increased.

Hankow. Hankow was liberated on 16th May, 1949. We recall that before liberation there were many rumours about communists and their attitude toward religion and we were duly warned to take precautions with regard to Bible Society work. The proof that these rumours were not unfounded came soon after liberation. Two gendarmes were ordered to stand at the entrance of the Bible House. From this time on there was not a single man coming to the Bible House for quite some time. One day a lady, Doctor K'ung, courageously entered and bought a copy of the Bible to give as a present to a friend. Soon after she went out the Bible was confiscated. I went immediately to the Military Affairs Committee (the highest organ at the time) and interviewed its head, asking him whether the sale of Bibles was forbidden. He answered courteously, " It is not forbidden." I asked him again, " May we sell Bibles?" He answered politely, " You may." " Why then have you ordered Bibles bought by customers to be confiscated?" I asked. " It seems a misunderstanding," he answered smilingly. " How are you going to settle this matter?" I asked again. " I will order them to send back it right away," he answered. Two hours after my return to the office the soldier sent back the Bible and apologised to me.

There are no big orders coming in at present, but the sale of single copies is increasing day by day. It really means something if a Chinese Christian comes and buys a Bible in the Bible House. He has conviction and believes in God. We are now planning to start a new movement to recover the youths of our churches and ask them to use Bibles as their weapons, carrying them with them at all times. The problem of the present Chinese churches is not so much to win new church members as to preserve the old ones ; not so much independence and self-support of churches as whether or not China wants God ; not so much the foreign board of the Chinese churches, as whether or not Christianity is to survive in China. We should remember that the light in the Holy Temple can never be extinguished.

Chungking. Many orders come in from distant places asking for Bibles and Testaments for devotional use, others call in person to buy books. We deeply regret that our stock of Chinese Bibles is nearly exhausted, due to the great demand. However, we still have enough New Testaments and Portions to supply those who are willing to approach our Lord and accept His word. Meanwhile we are awaiting Bibles recently shipped from Shanghai. Up to the present more than three hundred thousand copies of Scriptures have already been sold, the most remarkable result we ever had in our West China office.

■

Early this year, the Central Office of the Chung Hwa Sheng Kung Hui began the publication of the Daily Devotional Lessons (in Chinese) of the British Bible Reading Fellowship, and the organisation of Bible Reading Fellowships as a part of the work of the Sheng Kung Hui Three-Year Forward Movement Committee. The National Christian Council has made arrangements whereby this invaluable project may be extended to the churches of any denomination. There can be nothing of greater importance than the promotion of regular and intelligent Bible reading among all church members.

Czechoslovakia

The circulation figures for 1949 in Czechoslovakia show a new record :

Bibles	*Testaments*	*Portions*
20,910	21,438	48,072

a total of 90,420 copies distributed, as against 63,429 in 1948.

*

In a report of Dr. Adolf Novotny published in World Christian Education, we read the following characteristic passage :

Our boys and girls love Bible study so much that our Sunday-School teachers require a thorough education in order to become more equipped with Bible knowledge. Not methods of teaching, not child psychology, not questions of organisation, but knowledge of the Bible is required from teachers' training courses. One of the reasons for this longing after the knowledge of the Bible was the situation during the war when the Church's work was allowed only to be concentrated around the Bible. Another reason may be a real hunger for the Word of God. In God's providence an old saying of Pope Pius II, that the " old Hussite women know the Bible better than the Roman priests " may be fulfilled again.

Two Bible courses are now running in the teachers' training camp at Comenius, each lasting thirty days. 230 Sunday School teachers and youth workers are attending daily six hours of lectures ; sixty children, present in the adjoining room, form a training Sunday School. The total attendance is 580.

England

The Annual Meeting of the *British and Foreign Bible Society* will be held on Wednesday, 3rd May, 1950. The Chairman will be the Rev. H. B. Rattenbury and the speakers Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa, the Rev. H. M. Arrowsmith (the General Secretary-elect of the B.F.B.S. in Australia), and Miss M. S. Harrison, secretary for women's work in the B.F.B.S., London.

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The Society's Annual Summer Conference is being held this year in Swanwick, Derbyshire, from June 16th to 23rd under the general theme of " The World, the Book and YOU." Dr. Kagawa of Japan and Dr. Niemöller of Germany will be speaking at the conference, the aim of which is to promote interest and support for the work of the Bible Society.

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The Production Department of the B.F.B.S. gives the following figures for its production in Great Britain in English and foreign languages in 1948 and 1949 :

1948	*Bibles*	*Testaments*	*Portions*
English ...	263,216	139,312	399,434
Foreign ...	333,424	391,473	222,742
Total ...	596,640	530,785	622,176
GRAND TOTAL :	1,749,601		

1949	*Bibles*	*Testaments*	*Portions*
English ...	392,274	189,159	522,536
Foreign ...	898,733	474,924	380,312
Total ...	1,291,007	664,083	902,848
GRAND TOTAL :	2,857,938		

*

A Gallup Poll in Great Britain has been making a test, asking adults in all parts of the country : " Can you give me the names of any of the four Gospels, that is to say the first four books of the New Testament ? "

60% of those asked were able to give all four names, while 25% could not name any. The best were the Nonconformists, 75% of whom could name all four evangelists, and only 12% none of them. The lowest standard of knowledge was that of the Roman Catholics, with only 51% who knew the four evangelists by name, and 36% who were unable to name any.

The " News Chronicle " comments in a leading article, " the proportion of the ignorant rises as the age grouping falls. Those who left school fifteen years ago or since, either received less or have forgotten more knowledge of the Scriptures than their older fellow-citizens."

Finland

The dedication took place on 6th January, 1950, of the church attached to the new house in Turku (called the Mikael Agricola House) which the Bible Society was able to buy in 1949, with the help of the American Bible Society. The A.B.S. had sent 10 tons of coffee to Finland in 1948, the sale of which brought in enough to pay two-thirds of the new headquarters of the *Finnish Bible Society*.

Archbishop Lehtonen, Chairman of the Finnish Bible Society, officiated at the inauguration service. In his sermon he recalled the origin, at a time of revival, of the Bethel church now being rededicated, and expressed the hope that this church will now become the centre of the united missionary activity of all Christians in Finland, the Bible Society being at its centre.

Many messages of greeting and congratulation were sent to the Board of the Mikael Agricola House Foundation, which is formed of the Turku Chapter, the Finnish Bible Society and the Missionary Society of Business Men.

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The Bible Reading Society of Finland has approached the editors of all daily newspapers in Finland requesting that the papers include a daily Bible passage, selected by the Society. Some newspapers have already accepted the offer. The Finnish Bible Reading Society was founded last year on the initiative of Archbishop Lehtonen.

France

The Committee of the *Alliance Biblique Française* has decided to publish an illustrated Gospel of Mark. The prevalent idea is to take the illustrations from scenes of modern life in France, as for instance a French sower or shepherd instead of one from Palestine. This Gospel will be mainly used for missionary activities in France.

■

Bible Sunday in France has been fixed for June 11th. A special thanksgiving service will be held in the Oratoire, the main Protestant church in Paris. A popular meeting will take place on a weekday near that date in one of the big secular halls of Paris and the possibilities are being studied of organising a Bible exhibition with the help of the French National Library.

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The Committee of the Alliance Biblique Française has approved the idea of publishing a news bulletin. The first issue will appear in connection with the forthcoming Bible Sunday.

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In order to give support to Bible campaigns started by the churches and to special evangelistic organisations, the Alliance Biblique Française has decided to produce tracts, posters and exhibition panels dealing with the Bible and its diffusion. A special A.B.F. stamp is also to be on sale.

In addition to the above programme, the A.B.F. will soon have a Bible van ready for colportage work at markets, fairs and so forth.

Germany

The *Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt* gives the following figures for circulation in 1949 :

145,045	Bibles
111,376	Testaments (including Biblia Hebraica and Septuaginta)
60,449	Portions (including abridged Bibles)
750	Scriptures for the blind
317,620	Total

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The total number of inhabitants in Western Germany amounts to 43,700,000 people. 50.2% of these are Protestants, 45.8% Roman Catholics, 0.1% Jewish, 0.9% belong to other confessions and 3% are unchurched.

90% of the Roman Catholics in Germany live in the Western Republic and only 10% in the Russian zone.

The proportions for the Protestants are 57% in Western Germany, and 43% in Eastern Germany.

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According to recently published statistics of 1948 on the school-youth in Western Germany, 19.5%—i.e. 1.05 million—public school children were refugees. The percentage of refugee children in middle schools was 17%, and in high schools 14.5%.

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A questionnaire dealing with the subject " Belief and Morals " undertaken in August and September, 1949, was addressed to 8,000 adults in the British Zone and the Western Sectors of Berlin. The following questions which were included in this investigation are more particularly related to Church life and gave fairly clear results :

" Do you possess a Bible ? "

43% of the men and 48% of the women questioned answered in the affirmative. With increasing age the number of those who possess a Bible rises gradually to 55% of those over 56. In the same way, the percentage of Bible owners increases greatly as the standard of education and the social scale rises. Amongst Roman Catholics there are only 35% who possess a Bible, amongst refugees the figure is as low as 30%.

" Do you read your Bible ? "

From those who own a Bible, the answer to this question was as follows :

	Regularly	*Occasionally*	*Never*
Men	15%	50%	35%
Women	17%	58%	25%

The greatest percentage of regular and occasional readers is among persons over 48, while the majority of those who do not read the Bible is in the age group between 32 and 48. Amongst the Roman Catholics who are in possession of a Bible, 25% call themselves regular readers of the Bible, while a

further 60% read it occasionally. Amongst Protestants the same proportions are only 12% and 55%. On the other hand, 60% of the members of various sects* read their Bible regularly. As the degree of school education rises, so it seems that the percentage of Bible readers increases. In the social strata it seems however, that the lower groups have a higher percentage of regular and occasional readers of the Bible than the upper. A greater percentage of refugees read the Bible than do local inhabitants.

* All members not belonging to the so-called "Landeskirchen" (national churches) are called sectarian.

Greece

In 1948 the headquarters of the Greek Army sent a request to the American Bible Society and to the British and Foreign Bible Society for free grants of New Testaments for Greek soldiers. 135,000 New Testaments in Modern Greek went last year from New York to Athens, and the B.F.B.S. in Canada sent 38,500 copies in Ancient Greek. Major General D. Karachristos sent a letter of acknowledgment to the Societies in which, after describing how the distribution was made, he wrote :

Instructions have been given to the agents of the religious service, who personally make the distributions to the officers and soldiers, to accompany them by sermons on the value and the benefits to be derived from the reading of the Bible.

We inform you with pleasure that the New Testament has been received earnestly and is being read by the heroic fighters for our fatherland.(I Corinthians 3 : 5-10.)

May God, and the Father of Peace, reign on the hearts and spirits of all the people of the earth, and His holy will prevail.

The headquarters of the Greek Army has now asked the two Bible Societies for a further gift of 40,000 copies in Modern Greek and 10,000 copies in Ancient Greek for new recruits in 1950.

At our request, Professor P. Bratsiotis gave us the following account relative to the production and circulation of the Scriptures in the Greek Orthodox Church :

There is as yet no national Greek Bible Society, but this does not indicate a lack of concern for the distribution of the Scriptures on the part of the Greek speaking churches, nor does it mean an attitude of contempt toward the written Word. In spite of the disadvantages from which these churches suffered as a result of the centuries-long enslavery of the Greek people, an interest in the Bible was never extinguished and the distribution of the Scriptures among the Greek people was assured not only by the great British and Foreign Bible Society, but also by Greek scholars and publishers as well as by members of the Greek church.

Already before the Greek rising (1821-27), scholars were translating the whole Bible into Modern Greek and soon after the liberation of a Greek corner of the Balkan peninsular, the British and Foreign Bible Society began to publish separate books of the Old Testament, and in 1840 the whole Bible appeared in Modern Greek translation. Unfortunately, in its efforts to distribute the Bible among Greek speaking Christians, the B.F.B.S. was suspected of proselytism owing to the excesses of some of the foreign missionaries working among the Greek population and for that reason, the work of the Society met with much opposition, especially on the matter of the

translation into Modern Greek. And yet, in spite of this opposition, between the years 1810 and 1839 when the Old Testament in Modern Greek was completed, there were distributed 177,363 New Testaments and Portions.

At the beginning of the 20th century the first official Greek edition of the original text of the New Testament was prepared at the request of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and was printed in Constantinople in 1904. This text has since been reprinted several times and is the standard text of the New Testament in Ancient Greek, used by the Greek Churches.

Although no real Bible Society has yet been founded among these churches, it must be noted that during the last few years the theological brotherhood, " Zoe " founded in 1908, has, amongst other things, been playing the part of a real Bible Society. In 1928 this brotherhood published the Septuagint in 3,400 copies ; a second edition of 5,200 copies followed in 1929. In 1940, 8,700 copies of a Pocket edition of the Church Psalter, followed by a second edition of 11,200 copies in 1948, were also published by the Zoe brotherhood.

The New Testament (in the above mentioned patriarchal edition) was published by the same brotherhood in 1929 in 19,700 copies. Reprints followed in 1931 of 56,000 copies, 1939, 89,300 copies and 1948, 41,000 copies. In June, 1949, a Pocket edition of the New Testament of 29,700 copies appeared and in the month of December of the same year a further 37,800 copies were printed. Otherwise, the brotherhood has also provided for the production and distribution of commentaries on the various books of the New Testament, both of the more ' popular ' nature and those suitable for use by theological students.

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The Rev. W. J. Bradnock, Translations Secretary of the B.F.B.S., has received news from a friend in Thessalonica. We reproduce here an extract from this letter :

Along with the return to normality there is a spiritual resurgence which can be felt on every hand. I told you something about it last year, but since then it has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. Realising that if it was truly to win the masses for Christ rather than allow them all to become followers of Karl Marx, the Orthodox Church took an entirely new attitude toward the translation of the New Testament from the Ancient Greek original, which it has so jealously guarded through the ages, into the Modern speech which all the people can understand. 50,000 New Testaments in Modern Greek have been sent from America for free distribution in Greece and have the seal of approval of the Greek Ministry of Education stamped in every one of them. The people have received them as eagerly as hungry men reaching for bread. I was present at one mass meeting in the hall of the Chamber of Commerce in the city, where literally hundreds of the beautifully printed, strongly bound little volumes were being passed out. How thankful I was that along with all the material help America has given, devoted Christians there have made possible this greatest of all gifts to the people of Greece. Soldiers in the army are being given copies, which means men from hamlets and villages as well as every city. Our own student body has been well provided, and it is interesting to see the Bible study groups that have spontaneously grown up among the boarders. When one thinks of the far-reaching results of the translation of the Bible into English and German and its free circulation among the peoples of Western Europe at the time of the Reformation, one cannot but pause in almost breathless expectation at the thought of the effects of this new sowing of the Seed. It has naturally given a great

impetus to the Protestant movement in Greece, which though small in numbers, is nevertheless a strong spiritual force in the country.

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Miss Judy Gaselee, representative in Greece of Christian Reconstruction in Europe (the British Church Reconstruction Committee), wrote a letter last December to the Inter-Church Aid Department of the World Council of Churches, in which she describes the hunger for the Word of God which she has found in Greece :

First, may I explain the present situation ? In the course of my travels and correspondence with various dioceses, a number of them have brought up various requests for copies of the Greek New Testament ; two Bishops in the north have particularly requested these copies for their Sunday school work, and I have similar requests from about four other dioceses. I imagine that they are equally necessary everywhere, but it seemed to me best to start with those who had put it as a special need, as they are therefore most likely to be appreciative. Copies are needed everywhere where there are higher divisions of the Sunday schools or youth movements, and we could advantageously dispose of some thousands of copies .....

The Prophet Elijah Youth Association about which I particularly wrote, wanted the Nestlé text of the New Testament. The others have not specified, but the request is nearly always for the original and not for the translation. Copies are sold here by the Bible Society at 5,000 Drs. each (2/6), but that is more than many can afford .....

Finally I would like to say that I feel that this is a real and important need ..... It is difficult for us in the west, with our different emphasis of the place of the Church and of the Scriptures to realise how rare the possession of a New Testament is, and how few have ever read it for themselves. I am told that even theological students often buy one for the first time when they get to the university. A Bible study class has just been started at the Y.W.C.A. training school here, and I was told that probably it was the first time the girls had opened a New Testament. As there is this revival of awareness of the importance of Bible reading, I hope we will be able to make some contribution to support their efforts.

India

The head office of the *Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* has moved to Bangalore and is now situated at the following address : No. A/1 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore 1, South India.

Indonesia

A survey published recently in Indonesia gives the following statistics on the Church situation at the end of 1948 :

	Population (census 1930)	Christians (baptised)	
Sumatra	8,254,843	749,839	9%
Java	41,718,364	210,601	0.5%
Borneo	2,168,661	38,736	1.8%
East Indoniesa & New Guinea	8,585,365	1,060,315	12.5%
	60,727,233 (1930)	2,796,699	4.6%

Of the 2,796,699 baptised Christians, 2,059,491 (3.4%) are Protestants, 737,208 (1.2%) Roman Catholics.

Figures for full members are not complete, but they are much lower than those for baptised Christians. These churches are served by more than 2,880 ordained ministers and over 500 lay workers.

*

In the report on the work of the agency of the Bible Societies in Indonesia in 1949, we find the following information :

The central Bible House is now open in Djakarta, the capital town of the new State. The house was built in 1948 by the Netherlands Bible Society (address : 34 Djalan Raja van Heutsz, Djakarta). The stocks of Bibles and the furniture which were until now in the former Bible House in Bandung, are being moved to Djakarta as well as the emergency office which had been open in Makassar after the war.

The two secretaries, Mr. Khouw and Mr. van Holst Pellekaan will now work together and one of their first aims will be the re-building of the organisation of Bible work in Indonesia. Before the war there were 19 local branches in the different centres of Indonesia, with about 1,100 members. Some of these branches were already re-started in 1949 and a number of churches held collections for the work of the Bible Societies, which amounted to nearly fl.5,000 or about £470.

The circulation figures have not yet all come in, but the figures for the town of Surabaya alone show, for instance, that 2,251 Bibles were circulated, representing nearly as many as were sold last year throughout the whole of Indonesia.

25,000 copies of the Malay Old Testament, printed in the Netherlands last year, were already sold before the ship had landed in Djakarta. A new edition is under consideration, and orders for more than 200,000 copies have already come in. The 20,000 Toba Batta New Testaments which were shipped early this year are also sold, although not yet delivered and 5,000 Toba Batta Bibles, which are going to be sent next summer, are sold too. Of the new edition of the Malay New Testament (translation Bode) there are already 15,000 copies sold before they have been shipped.

Colportage was restarted in 1949, especially in Surabaya where four colporteurs are at work. Six translators are now at work on behalf of the Netherlands Bible Society, helped by twelve Indonesian assistants.

With regard to translations, the great difficulty at present is the Malay language. Through the co-operation of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Netherlands Bible Society, the Rev. W. A. Bode with two Malay-speaking assistants, one from Malakka and one from Ambon, had been working for many years on a new Malay translation. The translation of the New Testament was ready in 1938 and some 30,000 copies of this New Testament were sold before the war and now, in the last few years since the war, 70,000 more have been printed and mostly sold.

When the Japanese came, about one third of the Old Testament translation was ready and although most of the existing copies were destroyed by the Japanese, yet fortunately one copy survived. The Rev. Bode himself lost his life during the war, and the great problem now is to find someone who could soon complete this translation. An arrangement is at present under discussion and we hope that during this year it will be completed.

Japan

From the report of the Christian Literature Committee of the Japan National Christian Council we take the following information :

A noticeable change in the make-up of the reading public in post-war Japan as compared with before and during the war, is the great increase of readers among women and girls, among young people in general, and among the population in the rural districts. This is partly due to the economic and social changes which have taken place since the war, and will be continuing factors. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that at present publications are mostly distributed in the cities and the rural people find it rather difficult to get what they want .....

Of the number of post-war publications, Christians have almost equalled the Communist output, our surveyors having registered 1,096 books or booklets published since the war. (1,253 for Communist literature.) Of these, Protestants account for 64%, Roman Catholics for 21%, independents (Protestant emphasis) 8%, and unclassified 7%. All these statistics are confined to books outside the category of Bibles and hymnals .....

It is a source of deep gratitude that so many copies of the Bible have been sold during the past four years, and that plans are on foot to extend the distribution to another 10,000,000 copies during the coming three years. But a more up-to-date translation of the Bible, not necessarily for the Church's use, but as reading matter for non-Christians is an outstanding need in the Church's battle here .....

In this connection it was requested at the Conference on Christian Literature in Japan last June " that steps be taken through the International Missionary Council to secure the copyright for the translation and reproduction of the American Revised Standard Version of the Bible."

The *Japan Bible Society* was represented at the Conference and is also a member of the Christian Literature Committee.

*

The circulation in Japan in 1949 amounted to 1,900,000 copies of the Scriptures.

*

The Japan Bible Society has at present seventy-five colporteurs in the field, mainly working in rural districts. According to their reports, country people are most eager to read the Scriptures. There are, however, still many regions which have not yet been reached either by missionaries or by colporteurs.

In order to intensify the effort of distributing the written Word of God, the Japan Bible Society is also organising colportage work on a new basis. In each area a colporteur-in-chief will have associated with him a group of volunteer workers, all under the guidance of a local committee of Christian pastors and laymen. They will endeavour thoroughly to canvass their territory. By these methods it is hoped to carry the Scriptures into thousands of villages and rural communities which would otherwise not be reached. Through all of these channels the effort will be to sell the Scriptures, rather than to distribute them as propaganda, of which the Japanese have come to be suspicious.

Malaya

Mr. Morrison reports a successful annual meeting in Singapore. He was able to announce increased local support for the work, $3,935 as against $995 in the previous year, 1948. (The $3,935 is for nine months only.) Similarly, circulation has gone up from 44,979 books in 1948 to 60,926 books over the first nine months of 1949. Mr. Morrison looks forward to the day, perhaps still very far ahead, when there will be a Bible Society of Malaya, with a local governing body.

Netherlands

In recent years there have appeared in the Dutch language several new translations of the New Testament, so that there are now six different translations generally in use, namely the old States General Version of 1637 ; the Lutheran translation, being a Dutch version of the German translation by Luther ; the Leiden translation, made by a group of professors of the University of Leiden about half a century ago ; the translation of Professor Brouwer of the University of Utrecht ; the Roman Catholic translation of the Canisius Association, and the new Dutch translation of the *Netherlands Bible Society*, which is the most recent one. A good many church ministers are accustomed, if they want to preach about a text, not only to look it up in the original Greek but also to compare the different translations. In order to facilitate such a comparison of the translations the firm of Brandt and Zoon in Amsterdam is now, with the consent of the different bodies which hold the copyright of these editions, publishing a polyglot edition, giving in six columns these six translations alongside one another. This large size edition which costs about £2 will be a great help for all those who want to see how a certain text is rendered in the different Dutch translations.

In order to promote the reading of the Bible, the Committee of the Netherlands Bible Society has appointed a special sub-committee to give advice about the different means by which the use of the Bible in the Netherlands could be promoted. It is expected that this special sub-committee will take the initiative, not only for publishing several booklets in this respect, but also for a special edition of the Bible, which will be thus arranged that it will be easier for people, who do not know the Bible, to find their way about it.

A little over a year ago the Netherlands Bible Society asked the Polygoon-Profilti Company, which provides all the cinemas in the Netherlands with newsreels, to make a sound film of the work of the Bible Society. With the co-operation of the staff of the Bible Society this company made a 580 metre (1,798 feet) sound film, lasting 50 minutes. There appeared to be a great demand for this film, so that the Bible Society needed three Bell and Howell projectors in order that the film could be shown during the entire winter simultaneously in two or three places. Up till now the film has been shown in 369 places, and has been seen by 101,907 people.

The great majority of the people who came to see the film were already contributors to the Bible Society, but also a good many were not, as is shown by the fact that during the meetings 9,600 new contributors were won, contributing fl.16,879.55 (over £1,500). In entrance fees there were received, together with collections, fl.36,041.73 (over £3,500). Also during the meetings there was a stand where Bibles were sold for a value of fl.9,100.22 (about £900).

Scotland

In 1949 the *National Bible Society of Scotland* placed a total number of 561 Bibles in hotels.

*

An outstanding event during February was the visit to Scotland of the exhibition " The Way," kindly lent by the British and Foreign Bible Society. It was shown first in Edinburgh, then in Aberdeen, and finally in Glasgow and it is estimated that a total of 35,000 people paid it a visit in one or other of these cities.

Additional material was provided by the National Bible Society of Scotland, including many Scriptures in various languages printed in Scotland itself. Details were given of the colportage work done in Scotland, and also much information regarding the combined effort of all the Bible Societies together. Charts illustrating the great advances in the translation and production of the Scriptures since the start of Bible Society work in 1804 brought out clearly the debt the world owes to the Bible Societies for their labours in both directions.

In Edinburgh an additional attraction was the exhibition of bookbinding and gilding provided by Messrs. Andersons (Edinburgh) Ltd., and in Glasgow a similar exhibition covering printing, binding and gilding was provided by Messrs. W. M. Collins, Co., Ltd. The Bible Reading Societies also co-operated, and large numbers of Bibles and Testaments were sold at the N.B.S.S. stall.

In the afternoons and evenings there were meetings of various kinds with displays of films, addresses, musical programmes and a Pageant entitled " Our Heritage." Among the speakers were Miss Mildred Cable and Miss Dorothy Taylor from the B.F.B.S., the Lord Provosts of the three cities, outstanding figures in nearly all the churches, and several men and women well-known in Scottish life. A special feature was the attendance of a great many parties of school children. One headmaster gave it as his opinion that this fact alone completely justified the holding of the exhibition, as the children have learnt a great deal of real work in the pleasantest possible way, and already now the increased interest in Bible Society work has been apparent. Further exhibitions on a smaller scale are being planned in other towns in Scotland.

Switzerland

After further consultation and study of the problem, the Swiss Bible Societies have given up the idea of sharing a secretary in Geneva with the United Bible Societies. The leaders of the Swiss Societies consider that the burden would exceed the present very limited financial resources of the Swiss Federation, and they prefer to use these funds to help other Societies outside Switzerland.

*

The film " No more Frontiers " produced by the Netherlands Bible Society, in order to present the work of a Bible Society, has been shown in Switzerland for three weeks and has met with a lively interest in the churches where it has been seen.

Syria

An advisory Council has recently been formed in connection with the joint work of the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society in Syria and Lebanon. It held its first meeting in Beirut on December 13th, 1949. The Rev. Farid Aoudi, Head of the Supreme Council for Evangelical Churches, was elected chairman. The Council consists of nineteen persons.

Among the items on the Agenda at the meeting when the Advisory Committee was constituted was " a discussion on how the work of the Bible Society can be better integrated into the life of the Christian forces in Syria and Lebanon," and the " Rights and duties of the Advisory Council of the Bible Society in Syria and Lebanon." These were set out as follows :

(1) The office of the Advisory Council is to give the necessary counsel to the local agent, to the Agency Secretary and to the Bible Societies upon all that is pertaining to the good success and growth of the work ;

(2) Also this Council appraises current operations for effectiveness and suggests possible improvements ;

(3) Considers and reviews the budget and should be free to make and to evaluate proposals for advance ;

(4) So, the members of this Council are the important guides in matters of relations of the Bible Society with the government and the people of the country and should sponsor the local efforts to present the Bible cause in the churches, whether for encouragement of circulation, or for promotion of support or for the education of the constituency as to Bible Society work ;

(5) In emergency, this Council could meet to direct the administration of the Society's work.

United States of America

Many coal miners in Kentucky received their first copy of the Scriptures recently when a missionary, working through the coal operators, left Gospels at the local commissaries patronised by the miners. 5,000 copies supplied by the *American Bible Society* were distributed.

■

The thirteen millionth copy of the Scriptures to be distributed in the State of California by the American Bible Society was presented to the Mayor of San Francisco at a recent meeting celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Bible work in the Golden State.

■

A radio edition of the Bible has been prepared by the Protestant Radio Commission. This edition gives the old familiar text of the Bible itself in dramatic form.

There are thirty-seven 15 minute programmes available divided into three series. Series one, for example, includes the following titles : Master of Dreams, Ruler in Egypt, Whither Thou Goest, Prophet of Sinai, In the Beginning, Queen Esther, The Revolt of Absalom, The Flood, In Dust and Ashes, Give Us a King, Solomon The Wise, Prophet of Doom, and Blessed Are They.

■

Materials for use during the last Thanksgiving to Christmas period were mailed to 153,000 ministers and chaplains. Additional materials were requested by 25,000 of them. It is estimated that 75,000 ministers and congregations observed Universal Bible Sunday. Additional orders from educational institutions and others brought the total number of orders to 32,698. This resulted in a distribution of 11,668,605 book-marks listing the readings, 2,892,260 church bulletins for use at worship services, more than 1,294,823 offering envelopes and 251,241 posters, of which 14,265 were in foreign languages. The theme was " The Book to Live By." Overseas the demand for posters without wording to be imprinted in the vernacular exceeded the supply, which was 5,000 more than any previous year.

Press coverage on the whole was as large as any previous year. The two 15 minute radio programmes provided by transcription by the Society, were used by several hundred stations. The four major networks carried Bible Sunday broadcasts, using staff or committee members of the American Bible Society.

■

During the last days of November the American Bible Society had the annual meeting of its Advisory Council. This Council is, according to the bye-laws of the Society, " formed of representatives appointed by, and invited from the evangelical Christian bodies in the United States." This Council's function consists in co-operating " with the Board of Managers in interesting the churches which they represent in the work of the Society," and in advising the Board as to its purposes and plans. The Advisory Council particularly meets with the Budget Committee of the Society for the consideration of the budget.

In its findings the Advisory Council endorses the policy laid down by the Society for its activity in 1950 and urges the supporting denominations to help the Society to reach its goal for production.

At its December meeting the Board of Managers of the Society approved the budget as worked out by the Budget Committee and the Advisory Council, and received the report of the Findings Committee of the Advisory Council.

Main items of expenditure in the budget with regard to the production of Scriptures are :

$35,000	for Scriptures for the blind.
$399,222	for Scriptures to be circulated in the United States among the indigenous population as well as among immigrants.
$40,000	for Scriptures for service men and veterans in hospitals.
$746,114	for distribution abroad.

An amount of $66,865 has been allocated for translation and revision work.

Besides the regular budget which for 1950 amounts to $2,498,500, including $500,000 from returns from sales, the American Bible Society is continuing its Emergency Programme with the proposed expenditure for estimated needs of $798,414, of which $385,224 for the sending of raw materials to Germany, Korea, Japan and China. Last year's budget amounted to $2,509,900 and the Emergency Programme to $1,526,025.

■

A distribution of 3,269,590 volumes of Scripture in the United States during the first nine months of 1949 has been reported.

United Bible Societies

New Publications.

I. In the year 1949, the Bible Societies have produced :—

(*a*) Portions of the Bible in 7 new languages :

Language	*Country*	*Portion*	*Imprint*	*Size of edition*
Biete	N. India	Mark	B.S.I.C.	2,000
Chin : Anal	Burma	Mark	B.F.B.S.	—
Hula	New Guinea	Matthew	BFBS Australia	2,000
Jarai	Vietnan	Mark	B.F.B.S. Canada	4,976
Loma	Liberia	Mark	A.B.S.	—
Pitjantjatjara	N. Australia	Mark	BFBS Australia	5,000
Tarascan	Mexico	John	A.B.S.	—

(*b*) New portions in 11 languages, where some other part of the Bible had already been printed :

Bari	S. Sudan	Gal.-Philemon	B.F.B.S.	5,000
Chin : Khumi-Ahraing	Burma	Luke	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Eskimo-Barrow	Alaska	Romans	A.B.S.	—
Kambera	Indonesia	Luke	U.B.S.	3,006
Kanuri	N. Nigeria	John	N.B.S.S.	10,000
Mazateco	Mexico	Acts	A.B.S.	—
Navaho	U.S.A.	Matt., I Cor., Phil., James, I & II Peter	A.B.S.	—
Nukuoro	Micronesia	Matthew	A.B.S.	—
Sasaks	Indonesia	Luke	U.B.S.	—
Sura	Nigeria	Acts	B.F.B.S.	2,500
Tamahaq	Sahara	Ruth	N.B.S.S.-B.F.B.S.	5,000

(*c*) A first New Testament in 2 languages :

Biza Lala	Rhodesia	N.T.	N.B.S.S.	25,000
Tonga (Union or Rhodesian)	Rhodesia	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	10,000

(*d*) A first Bible in 1 language :

Shona (Union)	Rhodesia	Bible	B.F.B.S.	20,000

(*e*) Revised translations in 3 languages :

Portuguese	Brazil	Luke, Acts, Romans	B.S. of Brazil?	—
Sura	Nigeria	Luke	B.F.B.S.	2,500
Swahili	E. Africa	Psalms	B.F.B.S.	2,000

II. At the end of 1949 there were *under production* :

(*a*) Books of the Bible in 4 new languages :

Nuba-Moro	Sudan	Mark	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Nyimang	Sudan	Mark	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Riang-Lang	Burma	Mark	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Sara : Madjingai	F. Equ. Africa	John	B.F.B.S.	4,000

(*b*) New portions in 27 languages, where some other part of the Bible had already been printed :

Arabic (Palestinian)	Palestine	Mark & Luke	B.F.B.S.	—
Baya (Gbea)	F. Equ. Africa	Mark	B.F.B.S.	3,000
Dida	Ivory Coast	Matthew	B.F.B.S.	3,000
Gio	Liberia	John	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Ibo	Nigeria	Luke (literacy-new orthog.)	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Karamojong	Kenya	John & Acts	B.F.B.S.	each 1,000
Kingwana	B. Congo	Proverbs	B.F.B.S.	—
Konde	Nyasaland	Psalms	B.F.B.S.-N.B.S.S.	—
Lamba	Rhodesia	Lev., Jos., I & II Sam., Prov., S. of S., Dan., Obad.	B.F.B.S.	5,000
Limba	Sierra Leone	John	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Lwena (Lovale)	N. Rhodesia	Pent. Psalms	A.B.S.	—
Margi	Nigeria	Gospels, Acts	B.F.B.S.	—
Masana	Cameroon	Gospels, Acts	B.F.B.S.	2,500
Maya	Mexico	Gal. & Phil.	A.B.S.	—
Mukuni (Lenji)	Rhodesia	Mark & John	B.F.B.S.	each 2,000
Nanjeri	F. Equ. Africa	John	B.F.B.S.	—
Ngambai	F. Equ. Africa	Luke	B.F.B.S.	—
Nyemba-Portuguese	Angola	John	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Rennell	Solomon Is.	Gospels, Acts	BFBS Australia	—
Santo: Hog Harbour	New Hebrides	Psalms and Ephesians	B.F.B.S.	1,000
Sara: Kabba-Laka	F. Equ. Africa	Mark	A.B.S.-B.F.B.S.	—
Shilluk	Sudan	Mark and Acts	A.B.S.	—
Tonga (Rhodesia)	Rhodesia	I & II Samuel	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Ubir	Papua	John & John's Epistles	B.F.B.S. in Australia	1,000
Umbundu-Portuguese	Angola	Pentateuch	B.F.B.S.	3,000
Zande	B. Congo	Psalms	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Zoque	Mexico	John's Epistles	A.B.S.	—

(*c*) A first New or Old Testament in 20 languages :

Aranda	Australia	N.T.	BFBS Australia	—
Aymara	Bolivia	N.T.	A.B.S.-B.F.B.S.	—
Cakchiquel	Guatemala	Mark	A.B.S.	—
Chin: Laizo	Burma	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	—
Dinka: Padang	Sudan	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	3,000
Djerma	W. Africa	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	3,000
Kikuyu	Kenya	O.T.	N.B.S.S.-B.F.B.S.	10,000
Kikwango	Congo	N.T.	A.B.S.-B.F.B.S.	—
Kurukh	India	N.T.	B.S.I.C.	—
Luba: Kalebwe	E. Rhodesia	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	10,000
,,	W. Rhodesia	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Luo	Kenya	O.T.	B.F.B.S.	50,000
Manus	Admiralty Is.	N.T.	BFBS Australia	—
Moru	Sudan	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	1,500
Naga: Sema	India	N.T.	B.S.I.C.	3,000

Orokolo	Papua	N.T.	BFBS Australia	—
Paite	India	N.T. & Psalms	B.S.I.C.	—
Quechua (Ecuad.)	Ecuador	N.T.	A.B.S.-B.F.B.S.	—
Rundi	B. Congo	N.T. & Psalms	B.F.B.S.	40,000
Sobo: Urhobo	Nigeria	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	5,000

(*d*) A first Bible in six languages.

Ragoli	Kenya	Bible	A.B.S.	—
Fang	F. Equ. Africa	Bible	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Luba: Katanga	B. Congo	Bible	B.F.B.S.	25,000
Nupe	Nigeria	Bible	B.F.B.S.	10 or 20,000
Bemba	Rhodesia	Bible	B.F.B.S.-N.B.S.S.	30,000
Turkish: Kashgar	Turkestan	Bible	B.F.B.S.	—

(*e*) Revised translations in 15 languages :

Ashanti: Twi	Gold Coast	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Cherokee	U.S.A.	N.T.	A.B.S.	—
Efik*	Nigeria	N.T.	N.B.S.S.	45,000
Eskimo: Labrador	N. America	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Gilbert Is.	Gilbert Is.	Bible	A.B.S.	—
Herero	S. Africa	N.T. & Psalms	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Javanese	Java	Bible	U.B.S.	19,000
Luanda of Kalunda	B. Congo	Psalms	B.F.B.S.	5,000
Maori	New Zealand	Bible	B.F.B.S.	5,000
Nama	S. Africa	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Panayan	Philippine Is.	N.T.	A.B.S.	—
Pedi	Transvaal	Bible	B.F.B.S.	10,000
Quechua (Boliv.)	Bolivia	N.T.	B.F.B.S.-A.B.S.	—
Sea Dyak	Borneo	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	2,000
Swahili	E. Africa	Bible	B.F.B.S.	100,000

* Also 75,000 Efik Bibles with reprint of O.T. and revised N.T.

III. The following *manuscripts have been accepted* (waiting for printing) :—

(*a*) A portion in 1 new language :

Senoi	Malaya	John	U.B.S.(?)	—

(*b*) New portions in 5 languages, where some other part of the Bible has already been printed :

Arabic: Mogrebi	N. Africa	Exodus	B.F.B.S.	—
Bari	Sudan	Romans	B.F.B.S.	—
Conob	Guatemala	N.T. parts	A.B.S.	—
Tamashek of Timbuctoo	Sahara	Matthew	N.B.S.S.	—
Totonac	Mexico	John	A.B.S.	—

(*c*) A first complete New Testament in 1 language :

Baya : Mbere	F. Equ. Africa	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	—

(*e*) Revised translations in 3 languages :

Bari	Sudan	Mark (Literacy)	B.F.B.S.	—
Mende	Sierra Leone	Mark (Literacy)	B.F.B.S.	—
Yao	Nyasaland	N.T.	B.F.B.S.	—

U.B.S. at the Bangkok Conference.

As mentioned in our last Bulletin, the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES was invited to send a fraternal delegate to the Bangkok conference, organised under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council.

The Rev. W. H. Fonger, American Bible Society Agent in the Philippines, who represented the U.B.S. at Bangkok sent in a report from which we take the following extracts dealing more specifically with the work of the Bible Societies :

" So far as the specific work of the Bible Societies is concerned, little was accomplished and there was a rather general feeling that their work is taken for granted. For example, this statement which occured in the report of the Burma Christian Council, is typical of the attitude of all the groups towards Bible Society work : ' The work of the Bible Societies is so taken for granted as nearly to be overlooked in a report like this. That body is set on a costly effort to replace the numerous language editions of which stocks were lost in the war period. There is an immense back log of demand in the present shortage of Christian Scriptures for the growing Christian community.' Most countries, in their ' background reports,' had a section on Christian literature but very few mentioned the Bible in a specific way."

However, the following statement is to be found in the final reading of the recommendations on literature publication and distribution :

" In the distribution and use of Christian literature we must not forget the Bible. All too often it is taken for granted but it will not be distributed nor will it be read unless those who know it and love it put it into the hands of others. It therefore becomes the duty of the Church to assist in every way possible in the translation, revision, publication and distribution of the Holy Scriptures in order that every man may read the Word of God in his own tongue."

VISIT TO THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND CEYLON

October 5th—November 17th, 1949.

Yesterday and To-day.

ARTHUR H. WILKINSON

VERY recently a delegation from the British and Foreign Bible Society, consisting of Miss M. S. Harrison, Mr. R. K. C. Rose and myself, paid a visit to the Bible Society of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. We have returned deeply impressed with the position this Society holds in the life of the Churches in those countries. The sense of the importance of the work being done is by no means confined within the limits of the Society itself. Everywhere, by great and small, one heard the praises of the Society. Even the very complaints about the shortages of Scriptures due to post-war difficulties were themselves a tribute to the necessity of Bible Society work.

The position which the Society holds to-day is doubtless due to its long history of service. Some of the earliest contacts made by the founders of the

British and Foreign Bible Society were with Carey and his fellow-workers, and with certain chaplains of the East India Company. As the first President of the B.F.B.S. had himself been a Governor-General of India, it was quite natural that the thoughts of the Committee should be turned in that direction. A Corresponding Committee was started in Calcutta in the year 1804 and in 1812 the first Auxiliary was started in Calcutta. When I visited India in 1930 there were seven Auxiliaries. Scriptures were being circulated at the rate of a million and a quarter a year and over 100 translations had been made. All the seven secretaries of the Auxiliaries were European. The only Indian of a secretarial status was the Rev. Paul Krishnaswamy, who was assistant at Madras.

During the course of that visit I was deeply impressed with the strength of the Auxiliary Committees, on which I found many of the leading men and women of the Christian Church. There was a fairly even mixture of Indians and Europeans. As my tour continued I became more convinced than ever that steps should be taken towards the creation of an independent Bible Society. On my return to London the Committee accepted my proposal for the appointment of a General Secretary for India to co-ordinate the work and to bring into being a Central Advisory Council with the intention that, after some years of experience, an Indian Bible Society should come into being. I cannot claim that this step forward met with the universal acceptance of the Auxiliary Committees in India. Some, at least, disliked the interposition of a General Secretary between themselves and London, and pleaded for provincial independence. Consequently, the Rev. J. S. M. Hooper, who was appointed the first General Secretary, had to exercise much tact and patience, and I think it is true to say that it was rather because of pressure from London than enthusiasm in the Auxiliaries generally, that eventually the first Council met at Nagpur in 1944. Bishop Azariah was elected the first President and amongst the other members were the Bishop of Madras, Bishop S. K. Mondol, Dewan Bahadur K. Matthan, Mr. Justice Bose, Mr. B. L. Rallia Ram, Dr. R. B. Manikam, Mr. A. M. K. Cumaraswamy, Mr. R. M. Chetsingh, Principal P. Mahanty, Miss Sosa Matthew and Miss Wyckoff.

The first business was to consider a scheme for a constitution which had already been drafted on much the same lines as that of the Canadian Society. The Central Council was to consist of two members elected by each of the seven auxiliaries, together with five members appointed by the B.F.B.S., and three each by the American Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland, and in addition seven co-opted members. The General Secretary was to be the General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in India, and he was to be an ex-officio member of the Council. The appointment of some of the Council members and of the General Secretary by outside bodies may be criticised as a limitation of the full responsibility of the new Society. On the other hand, there were good reasons for the action taken. The members of Committees so appointed were, I believe, in all cases from towns and districts away from the big cities where the auxiliary Committees were stationed, and therefore more adequately represented rural interests. Moreover, they made it possible to bring in outstanding Christian leaders who could not have been appointed if the auxiliary Committees had elected the total membership. The appointment of the General Secretary by the B.F.B.S. assured the closest connection between the parent and daughter Societies. Of course, such an appointment must be made in consultation between the two bodies. When recently Mr. Mahanty was appointed, I took pains to consult the leading members of the Council.

I have never heard any complaints about these arrangements. The outside Societies have exercised their privileges with wisdom and tact. Nevertheless, I do not myself consider that the last word has been spoken on this subject. The time must come when the new Society will appoint all the members of the Council as well as the General Secretary.

After the meeting a letter, signed by the Chairman and Secretary, was addressed to the Churches of India informing them of what had been done and asking for the fullest support, particularly in the distribution of the Scriptures. (The Council meets only once in three years, but an Executive —elected by the Council—meets every year.)

During the course of their visit last year the delegation from London visited all the auxiliary centres, as well as several others of the large cities, and attended the meeting of the Council at Nagpur. Personally, I was much impressed by everything I saw. The Secretarial Staff, consisting of two Europeans and six nationals, formed a very efficient body, earnest and forward-looking. They had had to face all the problems common to Bible Societies in the war and post war years, and although they had not yet surmounted all their difficulties, they were well on the way to doing so. At the Council several important decisions were taken. One was the appointment of a Business Manager, who should be responsible for the central accounts and also for the centralised production at Bangalore. This involved the setting up of an office at Bangalore and it was considered in the best interests of the administration that the General Secretary should also have his office there. The headquarters will, of course, not be so geographically central but, on the other hand, it is nearer to the mass of the Christian population. It was also decided that an Assistant Secretary should be appointed, with headquarters at Delhi, an important step in view of the strategic position of the capital of India. Moreover, many of the native states in this region which have been closed, or practically closed to the work of the Bible Society, have become open under the new régime, and therefore call for development so far as Bible work is concerned.

This arrangement has been necessitated by the strained relationships existing between India and Pakistan. These have created an almost impassable barrier between the two countries and therefore in the interests of the work, it was decided that that section of the Lahore auxiliary which lies in India should be transferred to the Allahabad agency, thereby making that agency too large for one Secretary. In addition, the administration of the work in Kashmir also went with this transfer until such time as the political future of Kashmir is determined. Moreover, it was decided that the Rev. Chandu Ray, secretary for Western Pakistan, should correspond direct with London for the time being.

I do not know of any Bible Society which has a greater responsibility than this Bible Society. It has a population of four hundred millions of souls, of whom only eight millions are Christian. The penetration of such a vast mass of non-Christians cannot be undertaken by human personnel alone. In consequence, the spread of the Scriptures amongst the masses not only results in converts, but prepares the minds of many others for the work of the Christian pastor. In addition to the population of the three countries, there are the countries on the borders—such as Nepal, Tibet and Afghanistan. The Central Council is well aware that it cannot deal with such a vast task unless it secures the fullest co-operation of the Churches in India. It has therefore decided that in the areas where the Churches are well established, they must

undertake the distribution and that for the rest, new and better colporteurs must be found. This is a policy which will take time to develop, but it is satisfactory to note that the Christian Churches are already taking a much greater share in the work of distribution.

Everywhere I went in India and Ceylon I heard of the growing desire on the part of non-Christians to possess the Bible. One bookseller reported that he had never had such a demand for the English Bible from non-Christians as he had had in the two years following the granting of political independence. The situation in Pakistan is perhaps not quite so favourable. A Moslem state is being created there. History has shown that in Mohammedan areas the Bible is the most effective missionary and therefore the work of the Society assumes an increasing importance in Pakistan. Christians are well aware of this, and are giving their full-hearted co-operation.

Developments in Women's Work

MARJORIE S. HARRISON

One of the most enjoyable experiences that came my way during the visit of the delegation from London to the Bible Society in India, Pakistan and Ceylon was that of meeting some of the Christian women of these three Dominions and discussing with them, both in private conversation and on more formal occasions, ways in which they might be able to help forward the work of the Bible Society. In each of the Auxiliaries I was able to meet a group of women drawn from various Churches, who responded very warmly to the suggestions made to them. These groups are now beginning to undertake responsibility for certain pieces of Bible Society work. They will not, of course, all necessarily work in just the same way and will have to be adapted to suit local conditions, but in the main their activities may be summarised thus :—

1. The development of a Prayer Fellowship amongst the members of the group.

2. The sending of women speakers to visit the women's meetings connected with the Churches in the Auxiliary.

3. The encouragement of Bible reading in the home and of the distribution of Scriptures in the homes and schools of the Auxiliary.

4. The arranging of occasional United Women's Meetings.

5. The holding of Sales of Work and other events in order to help the funds of the Society.

In the past, women have not taken a very active part in this kind of work for the B. S. I. P. C., but these new groups are enthusiastic, and they have received the warm support of the Auxiliary Secretaries and the Central Council. They are only just beginning their work, and it will be most interesting to watch their development. One thing is certain : there are great possibilities in this Women's Work and, if it develops as it should, it can be a tremendous strength to the work of the Bible Society. As one of the leaflets published by the B. S. I. P. C. says, " In more recent years in India women have shown qualities of leadership second to none in a variety of ways from Governor of a Province to the Guild of Service and the Christian Home Movement." It is good to know that these women will be giving their qualities of leadership and devotion on behalf of Bible Society work.

One of the suggestions that particularly appealed to these groups of women in the B. S. I. P. C. was that they should be linked up with other groups

of women in England who were engaged in the same kind of work. The idea has appealed equally to the women in England and these links are now gradually being formed. They will have to be formed mainly through prayer and correspondence, though other ways may become practicable later, and they should prove to be a source of inspiration and strength to the groups of women in both countries. At present these links are limited to a few Auxiliaries but it should be possible, as time goes on, to increase the number, perhaps forming links with women of other lands as well, and so to help us realise more fully the world-wide fellowship of the Bible Societies.

Some Impressions of India

ROY K. C. ROSE.

First impressions on looking back on a tour of Ceylon, India & Pakistan, even if most of the journey has been by air, are, possibly, the immense distances of the sub-continent and the great multitudes of people, especially in the cities.

In any country, whether nominally Christian or not, the only known Christians are those the traveller meets as such ; so, to that extent, the fact that one is moving in a predominantly non-Christian community may not be immediately apparent. It is the sights and scenes that bring home to the traveller the truth of the matter. Nevertheless, if he spends most of his time in the big cities it will be very difficult indeed for him to assess the position by visual means.

One of the next most striking things is the general simplicity of life. Perhaps India does not want and will never have any but a very simple way of life. But real poverty is another matter, and perhaps the incidence of that may be reduced in time. Even in Western countries living standards are being reduced whilst poverty is disappearing. If a people lives simply, changes of its standard of living will matter less, but as a rule simplicity of life means that there is little to spare over and above the bare necessities of life.

But what does all this signify in relation to Bible Society work in India?

No longer does the wealth of the Indies flow to Europe, there to be mingled with the heterogeneous streams of Western wealth, and there redirected into the myriad channels of Western activity. The lack of local funds in India for Bible Society work was, and still is, supplied by support from Britain, but as India, Pakistan and Ceylon—along with other countries—increasingly retain their economic wealth within their own borders, so the ability of the West to help in Bible Society work must be expected to diminish. This of course may be a slow process, but it is one which, it seems, must inevitably come to pass.

What then is to happen? Is Bible Society work in India gradually to be reduced, or even to cease?

The answer is that so long as there are Christians, so long will the Scriptures be required, and it is part of every Christian's duty to " hold forth the Word of Life."

It is too often forgotten how the British and Foreign Bible Society has been used of God to increase the supply of the Scriptures since 1804, the year of its foundation. We have only to contrast the position of the supply of the Scriptures in that year with the supply to-day, even despite the arrears of production due to the war, to get some idea of what had been achieved, in the providence of God, by the associating together of Christians to produce the Scriptures.

Christian people in some countries are, however, perhaps inclined to take the supply of Scriptures as a matter of course, rather like the supply of bread or milk. But if the distribution of the Word of God is to reach rich and poor, and is to be a means of evangelism, Christians must see to it that their own Bible Society is supported, so as to meet, not only needs within their country's borders, but in less favoured lands. The greater the support, the greater may be the supply and the better the distribution of the Holy Scriptures.

This support is of two kinds. One is by means of gifts, the other by personal distribution. The first is obvious, but the second is less widely realised. Nevertheless, in the early days of Bible Society work the second was far more an important feature than it has come latterly to be.

It is probably not known that the cost of distributing the Scriptures is one of the biggest, if not the biggest item of a Bible Society budget. The smaller it is, therefore, in relation to the quantity of Scriptures circulated, the better. On the other hand, once let this monster of expenditure become too great, and your Bible Society work must begin to flag and fail in its major purpose—viz., to encourage the wider distribution of the Scriptures. Money which should be available to produce the Scriptures will be lacking.

In India where, in contrast to European countries, distances are so great and the Christian population so widely and, for the most part, thinly scattered, the work of distribution can be neither easy nor cheap. Indeed it tends to be very costly. In a small country with dense population, there will doubtless be bookshops which will serve as a means of distribution, but in a large country where the reading population is widely dispersed, no such means is available or if it is, it is quite inadequate.

We are, therefore, thrown back on those who are interested to see that the Scriptures are circulated to carry out the actual work of distribution, unless an organisation, necessarily expensive, is to be set up.

It seems improbable that there will be a great rise in the standard of living in India and other countries of the East, hence it cannot be expected that there will be a sufficiently great increase in Bible Society revenue to permit the establishment of a large and complicated distributing organisation. Voluntary colportage, and a personal devotion to the task of handing on the Scriptures by all members of the Christian Church will do much to overcome the difficulties which lack of finance may present. It is a matter of making much more of one's membership of the Bible Society. This membership must mean not only the support of meetings, the giving of donations and the reading and passing on of literature, but getting down to the work of distribution. Here is a fine opportunity for witness if not for evangelism.

GERMAN BIBLE SOCIETIES IN PROGRESS

CARL W. NOACK.

THANKS to a generous invitation from the Religious Affairs Branch of the British Control Commission for Germany, I had the privilege to visit Germany from 22nd November until 9th December, 1949. I was invited in my capacity as a member of the Standing Committee of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, and consequently my main purpose was to visit some of the German Bible Societies in order to see how they were getting along, and to give them what encouragement I could both in conversations with the

leaders and in occasional addresses to larger audiences. The invitation from the Religious Affairs Branch was valid only for the British Zone of Germany and Berlin, but the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, in co-operation with the Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland (Union of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany), provided means to extend my journey also to Frankfurt and Stuttgart in the American Zone.

In September the Verband had arranged a meeting in Berlin of Eastern and Western German Bible Societies, and there was an attractive invitation for me to attend this unique meeting ; but in September I could not spare the time for the journey. Fortunately, the General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, M. Béguin, was able to go to Berlin and under such circumstances I do not regret that my visit to Germany was postponed until late in November. Two months make quite a difference to the state of things in the recovery of Germany ; Bible work especially is now in a period of rapid progress which is perceivable from month to month. Consequently I was able to see one or two things realised which two months previously were only just planned.

There are two kinds of Bible Societies in Germany—their total being some twenty—most of them with no other purpose than to distribute the Holy Scriptures in the areas of their regional churches, but a few also producing Bibles, Testaments and Portions. The activities of the former, therefore, depend on the supplying power of the latter, and chiefly of the Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt in Stuttgart. It was impossible for me to visit all the Societies : except for Berlin, the Eastern Zone was closed to me, and as for the Western Zone, the time I had at my disposal limited the number of Societies I was able to visit to within narrow bounds. My first visit was to Hamburg, whence I went to Berlin, Hannover, Elberfeld, Frankfurt and Stuttgart, according to the itinerary planned in co-operation with the General Secretary of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES and with Pastor Bode, President of the Verband. Pastor Bode had arranged everything extremely well, so that everywhere the Bible Societies had been notified of my arrival and I enjoyed the most cordial welcome from the Presidents and Committees of the various Bible Societies.

In Hamburg and later in Hannover, I learnt that the Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt in Stuttgart had no more difficulties in supplying the common editions of the Bible and New Testament. In Elberfeld, the director of the Bergische Bibelgesellschaft was able to show me samples of further editions just received in sufficient number from Stuttgart, and when I finally arrived there I had the joy of seeing the works in full swing at all stages of printing, binding and packing the various editions of Bibles and New Testaments, including Biblia Hebraica, Septuaginta and Novum Testamentum Graece. Thanks to the gifts of production materials through the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES from America, Sweden and Switzerland, and also to the competence of the leaders and the skill and industry of the workers, the production here was almost normal. The Stuttgart Society's publications were always distinguished for first quality ; they have not fallen from this standard, and it is quite a pleasure to take one of their recently published books in your hand and open it.

The Bible House in Stuttgart has not yet been entirely rebuilt after the damage caused by the war, but the Chairman, Prälat Schlatter, and the Manager, Director Diehl, are full of thanks to God and men for what has already been achieved ; moreover, in the church halls of Esslingen and Lud-

wigsburg, suburbs of Stuttgart, where I spoke to congregations about Bible work and the use of the Bible, I had the impression that this thankfulness is also felt in large circles of the Church.

Another publishing Bible Society is the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin, which has just succeeded in sending out a first issue of the Bible, intended for the Eastern Zone as well as for the Western Sectors of Berlin. The Berlin Society faces the difficulty of having to pay for its production in West-Marks (in the Western Sectors of Berlin), but to sell most of its Bibles for East-Marks. When you realise that in the Western Sectors the East-Mark is equal to 1/7 West-Mark, you will understand what financial problems are bound to arise from such a situation. In order to compensate itself for only a small part of this loss, the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft has published some fine art books with Biblical motif, intended to be sold for profit in Western Germany and abroad. In the house of the General Secretary, Dr. Meinhard, I enjoyed a delightful evening in company with the venerable President, Dr. Burghart, and several members of the Committee, when we discussed the problems of Bible work in Germany to-day, as well as in other countries.

Still another Bible Society—in Altenburg near Leipzig—has started Bible production. Unfortunately I was unable to visit Altenburg because it is situated in the Russian Zone, and I missed Altenburg's contact-men while I was in Berlin. The Altenburgische Bibelgesellschaft has, in contradistinction to the Berlin Society, the advantage of one and the same currency (East-Marks) for receipts and expenditure.

With regard to the distributing, but not publishing, Bible Societies in Germany the Bergische Bibelgesellschaft in Elberfeld takes the dominant position, having competed for decades with the Berlin Society in the number of Scriptures distributed, its total being about 100,000 copies a year, half Bibles and half New Testaments. The Bible House in Elberfeld was destroyed during the war and has not yet been rebuilt ; a few small rooms of an old house in a narrow street serve as office, store-room and packing-room. Pastor Steiner, Chairman of the Society, showed me what had been saved from the fire ; it does not entirely fill a small show-case in the office. So much more admirable, therefore, is the energy that has started the work afresh and restored the Society's activities to almost the pre-war level.

Examples of smaller distributing Bible Societies are those of Frankfurt and Hamburg-Altona, the action of which is confined to the cities named. Nevertheless, the latter Society was formerly a publishing one, and the Chairman, Pastor Wilhelmi, who invited me to supper together with members of his Committee, showed me the last publication of the Hamburg-Altonaer Bibelgesellschaft—a magnificent German House and Church Bible of 1894.

Hannover is the headquarters of the Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland, the Chairman of which is Pastor Bode, Council member of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES. This Verband, or union, was formed in 1948, evoked by the provision of a UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES' bye-law that only one national Bible Society or Committee from any country may become a member Society. But the significance of the union of Bible work in Germany is ever increasing. It is true that I met a famous German evangelical Bishop who knew nothing at all about this Verband, still less about the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, but he may be an exception. The Verband is, in fact, making a name for itself through its increasing activities, such as the special services in churches and meetings in church halls held by

the recently-appointed Travelling Secretary, Pastor Fisch. He was formerly on the staff of the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin, where he was laudably spoken of to me by Dr. Meinhard. I saw him at Pastor Bode's house, after I had delivered a lecture in Pastor Bode's church one evening ; he had just returned from a tour and was very pleased with the responsive audiences he had found almost everywhere. I think this undertaking will prove very useful.

As the demand for Bibles in Western Germany is met little by little, the next step to be taken should be to offer the Bible to those who do not want it, and thus to stimulate the demand. It is true that the Eastern Zone is not yet satiated with Bibles—on the contrary, the Eastern Zone might take easily perhaps the whole production—but there is firstly the difficulty of rate of exchange between West and East, which would be ruinous to a Western Bible Society trying to sell most of its production in the Eastern Zone. On the other hand, the progress of Bible work in Western Germany should not be brought to a standstill because of Bible need in the Eastern Zone. In all probability, a progressive spread of the Bible in Western Germany, may help the Eastern Zone more than a statical one

As mentioned above, I had no occasion to visit the Eastern Zone except for Berlin. There, however, I met a few men from that part of Germany who told me of the Bible need in their districts. No doubt Germany still needs help from the United Bible Societies, but the change that has come about in Western Germany is most promising, and assistance from Germany itself may be counted on for the work that has to be done in the future.

THE BIBLE : CENTRE OF CHURCH LIFE IN HUNGARY

Olivier Béguin

IT is always with a certain sense of apprehension that one sits in the train which steams slowly from Vienna toward the Hungarian border. The carriage is almost empty : just two or three travellers. The countryside rolls past very slowly ; one might almost think that the train is afraid to penetrate this new, so little known world—afraid to take the plunge. As he sits here the traveller goes over in his mind all that he has read in the newspapers about life behind the iron curtain : nationalisation, confiscations, arrests, terror. What will he find, what will happen to him ?

The wait at the frontier is long; the train stands there for almost two hours. The examination of passports and luggage is soon over, but we have to wait. . . . a relic of the time when frontier traffic was heavy and the iron curtain had not yet been lowered. And then suddenly, off we go at high speed for Budapest. A few people get in at every station. The train gets longer, electricity has taken the place of steam . . . . .is that also a sign of the times ?

During the night red stars mark stations, factories or headquarters of the Communist party. Church towers are not capped by such stars, but from the top of the highest building they dominate the neighbourhood or town, seals of the new world which is being installed in the country.

The bridges of Budapest, now all rebuilt, sparkle with their lights ablaze and the avenues are brilliantly lit ; but the upper part of the town is in dark-

ness and when daylight comes I shall find that the silhouette of ruins has not changed since a year ago. The bridges, roads, blocks of flats, factories and schools were rebuilt at great speed ; most of the churches have also been restored, some of them entirely at the expense of the government. But the royal palace and the aristocratic homes of Buda, up there on the hill, have remained desolate ruins . . . . .another reflection of the change that has come to the political life of the country.

In Hungary to-day the thing that matters is the five-year plan : industrialisation of the country, increase of agricultural produce, improvement of means of communication, replacement of the traditional cultivated classes by the accession to secondary and higher education of representatives of the working and peasant classes. Reconstruction is, on the whole, more or less completed and one can but admire the speed and energy with which it has been achieved. To-day it is the revolution which must be completed. And this word means more than the perpetuating of the new government or the new political régime—it means the total transformation of the structure of the country and of society.

Last year the revolutionary nature of the situation was not so accentuated; the machinery was not quite in gear ; everything was still in the preliminary stages ; the old system was being dislocated more than the new one constructed; the patient was being prepared for the operation.

To-day the operation is in full swing and nobody knows how long it will take, nor what the patient will look like afterwards. Nationalisation is taking in new spheres : businesses of medium size (from 5 to 10 workmen onwards), all printers, some of the retail trades (jewellers and large shops.) The " koulaks " are gradually being eliminated by the organisation of peasant co-operatives and of kolkhoses. Foreign trade is turning toward the East : Russian cars are replacing the American ones ; Russia, and no longer Germany, is supplying the market with manufactured goods in current use, such as household articles and cloth.

Cultural and intellectual life is shutting down to Western influences and opening up to Russian productions : at least half of the books by foreign authors which are offered to the public in booksellers' catalogues are translated from Russian ; Russian films have almost entirely taken the place of those coming from the West ; and amongst others which are being submitted to a similar fate, many to the advantage of Russian authors, one of the most famous avenues in Budapest—the Andrassiutca—was renamed Avenue Stalin on the occasion of the seventieth birthday of the leader of the Russian government.

These are but a few indications, but they will suffice to sketch the outline of this complete changeover. The revolutionary machinery is, as the case may be, either pounding or nibbling at all that remains of the old régime, anything that seems to be linked with the West, with the " bourgeois " social order and it is indeed an entirely new world which is rising to-day behind the iron curtain—as different from its predecessor as the world of the French revolution was from the society of the eighteenth century, even as different perhaps as the middle ages were from the decadent Roman empire. Western standards of justice, tyrrany, freedom of conscience, rights of man, are no longer valid there ; new categories and norms are replacing the old and it is in them that one must now think and act.

It is against this setting that the drama of the churches behind the iron curtain must be considered. Only at the expense of no longer being the Church could they identify themselves with, or pose as defenders of Western civilisation as such. Neither could they identify themselves with, or pose as defenders of the communist ideology, which gives the present revolution its shape. But it is their task, under the circumstances which have been imposed upon them and in the language of the day, to bear the eternally true message of the love of God towards men, and the eternally valid appeal to repentance and conversion.

In the West one often hears it said that the churches or their leaders behind the iron curtain sold themselves to the communists. This is an oversimple and false affirmation, arising more out of *a priori* politics than from an effort at Christian understanding. (Moreover, it is using the language of godless communists who never miss an occasion to declare that the churches of the West and their leaders are sold to the plutocrats.) The Christians—those who are so not only by name !—are well aware that the communist ideology is an humanism whence God is excluded. What is important for them is to fight against this humanism, not with the blows of ex-communication, but by faithful and persevering witness. Not by condemning it, but by moulding it, if I may say so. Not with political weapons, but with the weapons of the Christian ; not by means of theories on the rights of man, but by taking the Word of God into this world which knows it no longer and is suspicious of it. To be a witness *in* this world in revolution and not *against* it.

In a sense one has the impression, when seeing the churches progressively deprived of the " rights " which they held under the preceding régime (property, schools, homes, orphanages, etc.) that one is gradually approaching a situation which will be very similar to that of the primitive Church, reduced to a minimum of exterior organisation, stripped of most of her specialised organs. In fact, an evolution exactly parallel to that which was foreshadowed in Germany in the confessing church, a little before the war.

The leaders of the Hungarian churches are expecting, or are at least conscious of this possibility, and are preparing themselves and their churches for it by concentrating on action in the local communities, and on the co-ordination within the framework of the local church of the activities of various groups—men's work, women's work, youth groups, etc.—which have, up to the present, been more or less independent. The central organisation of the churches is increasingly ceasing to be an administration ; it is tending to become more of a centre for stimulus, an organ of liaison at the service of local churches. With their individuality menaced by present legislation which nationalises any independent organisation, Christian " works " are taking refuge within the walls of the Church and are becoming once again activities of the Church. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the various groups of Christian work had formed themselves outside of and alongside of the official churches, but to-day they are coming together and can come together because the churches are once again becoming confessing churches, churches with a testimony.

Here again this is not a temporary measure—as was the case, for instance, in several of the countries occupied by the Germans during the course of the war. This reintegration of the " works " into the Church, this resuscitation of the Church, mark a necessary stage in the ecclesiastical history of the countries behind the iron curtain, and on the ecclesiastical level they indicate a transformation which is as profound as the one being enacted on the political

level. In an area which has been " dechristianised " and which wishes to be so, a scattering of effort and internal conflicts are no longer permissible ; unity of witness and action become a necessity.

Things have come to such a point that not only Christian " works " are seeking refuge within the walls of the Church, but the churches of various denominations have, during the last year, arrived at a quite remarkable degree of co-operation amongst themselves. Only one who was present both at a meeting of the Bible Committee three years ago and at one of the present-day sessions of the Bible Council, can appreciate to what extent the atmosphere has been purified, and how far a team spirit has come in to take the place of former jealousies and the old spirit of defiance and irritation roused by any attempt to come together. And it is certainly not the least of the paradoxes of the situation in Eastern Europe that it has taken the inauguration of a régime openly founded on an atheistic ideology to bring true life back into the churches, and to lead them into the path of oneness.

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Like the other independent Christian " works " in Hungary, the agency of the British and Foreign Bible Society has also come under the care of the Church. Early in 1949 the B.F.B.S. handed over to the Reformed Church in Hungary the responsibility for its work of producing and distributing the Bible in that country, on the condition that an advisory interecclesiastical Bible Committee be formed in a short time. This Committee has now been constituted under the name of *Hungarian Bible Council*, with Bishop Bereczky of the Reformed Church (the largest of the Protestant denominations) as Chairman. By his side he has, as Vice-Chairmen, the Curator of the Lutheran Church, Dr. I. Reök, and the Chairman of the Council of Free Churches, Professor F. Kiss. The Council has about twenty members, representative of all ecclesiastical groups.

A small business committee of three has been appointed, consisting of the Secretary of the Council, who is a member of the Reformed Church, a technical manager, Mr. Szabadi who is a Baptist and who up to the present time had been the B.F.B.S. agent in Budapest, and a Lutheran.

Finally, a revision committee divided in two sections, one for the Old and one for the New Testament and presided over by Professor Pakozdy of Debrecen University, is at work on a new revision of the Karoly text. The New Testament revision is almost completed, but that of the Old Testament will take about another two years.

This reorganisation of Bible work in Hungary would, however, be of very limited value if it did not correspond to a notable change in the attitude of the ecclesiastical leaders themselves with regard to the place of the Bible in the life of the Church. That which has come to be called the " rediscovery of the Bible " in our churches has taken on a quite extraordinary fullness in Hungary, as indeed it has in most of the churches behind the iron curtain.

The men who to-day preside over the destinies of the Hungarian churches were all formerly promoters of large-scale evangelistic efforts within the bounds of their own churches. They know that it is only in the Word of God that the Church can find the way to revival and testimony. They also know that any evangelistic campaign will only end in failure if it is not founded on the Bible and if it does not lead to a serious study of the Word of God.

For four years, but particularly during these last two years, the churches have launched an evangelistic campaign without precedent. By last autumn

this appeal and this effort to rally the people seemed to have completed its effect, and it became increasingly clear that the emphasis should no longer be laid on appealing, but on teaching, no longer on collecting material together but on constructing and building up the Church.

A plan of Bible study was then set in motion. Some information on Hungary in our last issue made mention of this. And now, throughout the country, Bible courses lasting three weeks and grouping between 40 and 50 participants, are being organised : 24 courses are planned for the period from autumn 1949 to the end of the following spring. The teaching is undertaken by about 100 laymen and pastors who followed two special preparatory courses last summer. The backbone of the three weeks' course is the study of the Bible or, more precisely, the study of what the Germans call the " Heilsgeschichte"—the history, as given in the Bible, of God's action in human history for the salvation of all. At each lecture a section of the Bible's message is studied, and this is followed by a theological, historical or practical lecture. Thus the study of the history of the Patriarchs will, for instance, be followed by a study on the problems of faith and obedience, justification and sanctification, and the history of Israel by a study on the history of the Church ; a study of the New Testament might be followed by one on the Church and the world, or on the life of the Church. The whole course points to the central responsibility of the Church, namely its missionary activity considered from an eschatological point of view, as preparing the ground for and leading to the second coming of the Lord and the setting up of the Kingdom of God.

Those who take part in these courses will afterwards be called upon to lead Bible study groups in their local churches. A certain number of them, however, will be able to proceed to one of two Bible Schools—at Debrecen and at Sarospatak, where there are theological faculties—and there they will be prepared, over a period of two years, for lay ministry in their own churches.

The Lutheran Church has neither the means nor the personnel for such an enterprise, but in several regions Bible seminaries have been organised for training those responsible for the organisation of church life in the local communities.

Thus the teaching of the Bible is taking an absolutely central place in the life of the churches and in the theological thinking of the two main Protestant Churches in Hungary, which in this way have grown very much nearer the Free Churches, which have always been more " Bible conscious " than the others. The Bible is no longer just a book for personal devotions but it is truly and completely becoming the Book of the Church, the Book around which the community gathers and prays and from which it draws all wisdom for its testimony and its action in the nation.

The natural outcome of this, of course, is that alongside of the interest in the contents of the Bible and in its message for the world of to-day, there has developed an equal concern for its distribution and for making it known and read. The Hungarian Bible Council has not only decided to hold a Bible Week in all the churches during May of this year, but has also adopted a plan for intensified Bible distribution throughout the country by means of the local churches and their various groups. These communities, which should be cells of active life, should also assume the responsibility for the distribution of the Bible as an integral part of their missionary action.

This new conception of the Church's responsibility with regard to Bible circulation can be found in many other countries in Europe, but it is usually

still at the stage of an idea or a problem. Nowhere has it yet taken such definite or immediate form as it has in Hungary. It would indeed seem that an avenue for Bible distribution is opening up here which has never been sufficiently explored, but which could give an entirely new impetus to the efforts which the Bible Societies have been expending over the surface of the whole earth for the past 150 years. Until now the churches, while recognising the importance of Bible Society work and contributing to it by their interest and gifts, have hardly taken an active share in the work of circulating the Bible. Nominally the Bible, the Word of God, has been at the centre, but in practice other problems and considerations have been uppermost. Throughout the world the churches seem to be preoccupied with problems of evangelisation and re-evangelisation of the masses ; it is striking, however, that the Bible has very little place in these projects and that its right position in these various efforts does not yet seem to have been discovered.

The rediscovery of the Bible is, therefore, in this sense still theoretical ; the day when it comes down to the arena where the messengers of the Good News are labouring, and when evangelisation consists less of bringing back to *church* those who have strayed away, and more of leading to *Christ* those who do not know Him, on that day it will be impossible not to see—as those working in Hungary are now discovering—that the Bible alone can be the key which opens doors, the leaven which makes the dough rise, the light which reveals Jesus Christ, the corner-stone without Whom nothing can be built.

LET US JOIN IN PRAYER

CARL W. NOACK

PAUL THE APOSTLE ought to be the right one to lead us in prayer after we have read the previous pages of this Bulletin. I am afraid that without his clear direction I should be drowned in the multitude of items, setting my head in a whirl and pressing my heart from all sides. But Paul is helpful. By means of a few words he has made the items arrange themselves into two files, drawn up in front of us and asking for prayer.

In his Epistle to the Colossians we read in chapter 4, v. 2-4 :

" Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving ; withal praying also for us, *that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ,* for which I am also in bonds ; *that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*"

We will pray, that God may open to His eternal Word the doors which the literacy movement is quickly constructing in the walls, which so far detain percentages from 50 up to 100 of many peoples in the obscurity of ignorance. The peoples becoming literate is not, as a matter of course, tantamount to doors being opened to the Word of God. Neither can the latter be achieved by virtue of any Bible Society action. There is something depending on God alone. People may become literate, and Bibles may be printed in hundreds of tongues, agencies be established and thousands of first-class colporteurs be ready to offer the Scriptures, but God alone is able to open the door.

We are in the same case as regards the countries behind the iron curtain or countries with a Roman Catholic majority, hostile to the propagation of the Gospel. We may do our best, or be unable to do anything. But God opening the door is the first and last condition of any success.

Let us pray that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.

We will pray also that this mystery may be manifested, as it ought to be spoken and written. There is a tension arising between the necessity of presenting the Gospel by means of the minimum vocabulary that the new literate and the man in the street can master, and the duty to declare all the counsel of God. (Acts 20 : 27.) The translators—including those translating the Gospel into moving pictures—must take great pains and exercise all care in finding the point of balance in this tension ; but we should not trust human ability to do so. God alone is able to lead the spirit of man to the proper combination of simplicity and adequacy of terms.

Let us pray, that all stewards of the mysteries of God may make it manifest, as they ought to speak.

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Notes on Contributors.

Rev. W. J. Platt : Member of the Standing Committee, United Bible Societies ; General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Rev. Dr. F. C. Laubach : Field Representative of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

Prof. P. Bratsiotis : Professor of Old Testament History at the University of Athens.

Rev. A. H. Wilkinson : Vice-Chairman of the Council of the United Bible Societies ; General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

Miss M. S. Harrison : Secretary for Women's Work, British and Foreign Bible Society.

Mr. R. K. C. Rose : Chief Accountant, British and Foreign Bible Society.

Rt. Rev. Bishop C. W. Noack : Bishop of Haderslev, Denmark ; delegate of the Danish Bible Society on the Council of the United Bible Societies and member of the U.B.S. Standing Committee.

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